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ART. I.—*Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity, before the Lowell Institute, January, 1844.* By Mark Hopkins, D. D., President of Williams College. Boston: Published by T. R. Marvin. 1846. Svo., pp. 383.

WE fully agree with the learned author, that the evidences of our religion are exhaustless. Though truth is one, as the centre of a circle is one, it may be viewed from as many points as are to be found in the circumference. Every comparison of revealed truth, with all other truth, tends to show the harmony of the whole. According to the cast and temper and discipline of individuals, different minds will view the subject differently; and hence the body of evidence may be expected to accumulate as long as the world lasts. There are kinds of proof which are fitted to certain states of society and human opinion, and which, after serving their purpose, cease to be regarded. Thus, for example, the reasonings of the early Fathers, in their apologetical treatises, which seem to have been sufficiently cogent in their day, exhibit arguments on which we should scarcely rely in ours. Every student of theology has been struck with the very different points of view assumed on this subject, by the Germans and the English, respectively. And, with the progress of science, the increase of exegetical research, and the mutual reflections of prophecy and history, we may expect a series of devel-

Upon the whole, we would remark, that from the character given of Mr. Housman, in this volume, though some allowance may be made for the partiality of the biographer, yet it is evident, that he was a clergyman of rare accomplishments. Although he did not possess the very highest order of intellectual powers, yet his mind was well balanced; and all his faculties were of that kind which qualified him for eminent usefulness. We could wish and pray that the church might be supplied with many ministers exactly of his mould. His life, though protracted, was useful and comfortable to its close.

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ART. IV.—*General Assembly.*

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America met, agreeably to appointment, in the Tent, Presbyterian Church, in the city of Philadelphia, on Thursday, the 21st day of May, 1846, at 11 o'clock, A. M., and was opened with a sermon by the Rev. John M. Krebs, D.D., Moderator of the last Assembly, from Galatians vi. 14: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

After the sermon, the Assembly was constituted with prayer. The Permanent Clerk, from the Standing Committee of Commissions, reported the names of persons entitled to be enrolled as commissioners.

*Title of Bishop.*

When the roll was read in the afternoon of the first day of the sessions of the Assembly, Dr. R. J. Breckinridge moved that the word Bishop be struck out in every case where it was applied to the clerical delegates, and that the word minister be substituted in its place. This motion prevailed by a large majority. With regard to the title Bishop, there are certain points as to which all parties may be considered as substantially agreed. One is that in the New Testament, the title is given to those officers in the Church who are appointed to rule, teach, and ordain. Another is, that the terms Presbyterian and Bishop are applied

to be reunited. It is not wonderful that those who looked upon the matter in this light, should strenuously oppose the measure. We doubt whether there was a single member on the floor of the Assembly, who was prepared to do any thing which he regarded as a recantation of the testimony borne in years past against the prevalent errors of the New Divinity, or who regarded the union of the two churches as at present constituted, as even possible, much less as desirable. The difficulty was to see how the mere act of communing together, which according to the avowed doctrine of the speakers themselves, implies nothing beyond Christian fellowship, could fairly be interpreted as a recantation of our former testimony, or as an avowal of a desire for ecclesiastical union. We do not renounce our Calvinistic creed when we commune with Arminians, nor express the idea that the Episcopal and Presbyterian churches should be united, when we join with Episcopalians in commemorating the death of our common Lord.

There were again a large portion of the Assembly, who would have gladly voted for accepting the invitation, could it have been done with unanimity, but who thought it undesirable after the matter had been so much debated and opposed. The minute adopted was a compromise, satisfying no part of the Assembly entirely, yet generally agreed to as the best thing that could be done under the circumstances. That minute, by distinctly recognising the other Assembly as a branch of the church, by professing towards them Christian courtesy and fellowship, and by placing the refusal of the invitation upon the ground of usage, deprived the refusal of every thing that could wound the feelings either of the other Assembly or the Christian community.

#### *Parochial Schools.*

A committee of which the Rev. Dr. James W. Alexander was chairman, appointed by the last Assembly, made an important report on the subject of Parochial Schools, which was read and ordered to be printed for the use of the members. The report closed with the following resolutions, viz:

“*Resolved*, 1st. That, in the judgment of the General Assembly, any scheme of education is incomplete which does not include instruction in the scriptures, and in those doctrines of

grace which are employed by the Holy Spirit in the renewal and sanctification of the soul.

"*Resolved*, 2d. That, in consideration of the blessings derived to us, through our forefathers, from the method of mingling the doctrines of our church with the daily teachings of the school, the Assembly earnestly desire as near an approach to this method as may comport with the circumstances of this country.

"*Resolved*, 3d. That the Assembly regards with great approval, the attempt of such churches as have undertaken schools under their proper direction; as well as the zeal which has led individuals friends of the truth to aid the same cause.

"*Resolved*, 4th. That the Assembly recommends the whole subject of Parochial Education to the serious attention of the church—counseling all concerned to regard the maintenance of gospel faith and order, in the founding of new schools, the appointment of teachers, and the selection of places of education."

On motion of Dr. Young the following additional resolution was adopted.

"*Resolved*, That the whole subject of the report be referred to the Board of Education; that they may, from time to time, report to the General Assembly any further action that may be needed for extending through our churches a system of Parochial Schools."

The whole report was finally adopted and ordered to be printed in the appendix to the minutes.

The only point which gave rise to any debate was that contained in the second resolution, which affirms that "the doctrines of our church" ought to be mingled "with the daily teachings of the school," necessarily implying that there ought to be schools under the control of the church. This brought up the great question, whether Presbyterians ought to join with other denominations and sustain the common schools of the state, or whether they should as far as possible establish Parochial Schools under their own exclusive control. When the matter first came up Dr. R. J. Breckenridge made a short and effective speech against the principle of Parochial Schools; and Dr. Tallmadge spoke in reply and in favour of the report. The subject was then postponed and made the order of the day for the afternoon of the following Thursday. When that time arrived, after a short debate, the discussion was again postponed, and finally the

report was acted upon without having been debated to any extent according to its importance. The principal objections urged against the report were, first, that the whole spirit of the age and of our country is in favour of popular education, that spirit we cannot effectually resist, it must have its course, and therefore it is the duty of every evangelical denomination to throw its influence into the movement, and give the common schools of the country as Christian a character as possible. Secondly, that, since Presbyterians, in consequence of their general intelligence, have an influence disproportioned to their relative number, they are of all denominations the last which should withdraw from this general partnership; they are sure to derive more benefit from it, and to have more power in controlling it, than would be due to them on account of their numbers. Thirdly, that it must be disastrous for any body of Christians to separate themselves from the community, sitting apart as on an insulated tripod, out of communion with their fellow citizens. If they would prosper they must enter heart and hand in the common enterprises of the country, in which they have an interest, and not attempt to set up for themselves. Fourthly, that the diversity of sects to be found in all our towns and villages, renders it impossible that each church should have its own schools. Fifthly, that the plan proposed would involve a vast expenditure of men and money; millions would be required to erect and sustain a school in connexion with every Presbyterian congregation in our land.

These arguments have certainly great weight, but they do not seem exactly to meet the case, nor to counterbalance the considerations on the other side. Dr. Lindsley, Dr. Reed, Mr. Mebane and Dr. Young sustained the report, the latter speaking at some length and with great strength of argument in its support. It is a conceded point that children ought to be religiously educated; that not merely natural religion, but Christianity, and not merely Christianity in general, but in the definite form in which we believe it has been revealed by God for the salvation of men, ought to be inculcated on the infant mind, so that the rising generation shall be imbued with the knowledge of divine truth. Secondly, it may be assumed as conceded that it is the duty of the church to impart this religious education. This is one of the most important parts of her vocation. She received her commission to teach; she is by the will and authority of her author an insti-

tute of education, established to communicate and preserve the knowledge of God, of Christ, of the way of salvation and of the rule of duty. Thirdly, this is a duty which the church cannot devolve on others; she cannot throw the responsibility on the state, for it is the very work God has given her to do, and she might as well look to the state to preach the gospel, as to make disciples of the nations by *teaching* them. Fourthly, the only question then is how the church is to acquit herself of this obligation; how is she to fulfil her vocation as teacher as far as the young are concerned? Can she safely rely upon family instruction, on Sunday schools, on the religious teaching of pastors, separately or combined? It is acknowledged that all these modes of religious education are legitimate and important, and ought to be assiduously used, but they are all inadequate. With regard to family instruction, it is obvious that many parents have no disposition to teach their children the doctrines of the gospel; others who may have the disposition, have not adequate knowledge or skill; so that if the church were to rely on this method, a very large part of the young for whom she is responsible, would grow up in ignorance. As to Sunday schools, they are inadequate for two reasons, first, because in most cases they embrace children of various religious denominations, the instruction given is consequently often too general; and secondly, because only an hour a week is devoted to the subject, a portion of time altogether insufficient to attain so great an end as teaching Christianity to the rising generation. As to pastoral instruction, this is or ought to be the main reliance of the church, and is an agency of divine appointment which no other should be allowed to supercede or weaken. Much in many parts of the church is effected by this means, and more ought doubtless to be accomplished. The pastor by catechetical instruction, by teaching the Bible, and by other means, has it in his power to do a great deal towards attaining the great end in view. The pastor is the teacher, the *διδασκαλος* of his whole people. But at best this brings under instruction only the children of the church-going part of the population, leaving a large portion of the whole number unprovided for. Then again it is rare that the pastor can, or at least does, bring even all the children of his own people under this course of training. Either their number, or the wide extent of country over which they are scat-

tered, or the pressure of other duties, or the remissness of parents, or other reasons, prevent this agency from fully accomplishing the desired end. It is an obvious fact that if the children of the country had no other religious instruction than that derived from the pastor, they would to a vast extent grow up unenlightened by the knowledge of the Bible. Our condition is greatly modified by the peculiarity of our political institutions. In Prussia and other countries of the old world, the law intervenes and requires the attendance of the children on the instruction of the pastor, and makes it obligatory on the pastor at stated times to give that instruction. Every pastor has always under instruction all the children of his district, between the ages of thirteen and fourteen for boys, and eleven and twelve for girls. He is required by law to meet them once a week and take them through a prescribed course, and they are required to attend his instructions, and at the end of the year they are publicly examined. A certificate of having satisfactorily sustained that examination, is demanded of every young person before he can marry or in any way settle in life. Any thing of this kind among us, is of course out of the question. Unless therefore the church can employ some other agency than those already mentioned, she will not accomplish her vocation as the teacher of the people. That other agency is the common school. In all ages of the church and in every part of Christendom it has been considered a first principle that religious teaching should be incorporated with the common school system. This is not peculiar to Protestantism. In Popish countries it ever has been, and still is the great aim of the priesthood to get the children imbued, while pursuing their secular education, with the doctrines of the church. In this they are right. Their error lies not in thus incorporating religion with early education, but in teaching a false system of religion.

Until the difficulty arising from diversity of sects began to be felt, it was the universal rule that the church system, the doctrines of the gospel as held by the church, should be sedulously taught in the schools. To meet the difficulty just suggested, the first plan proposed was to fix upon some common standard of doctrine in which the several sects could concur, and confine the religious teaching within those limits, leaving denominational peculiarities to be otherwise provided for. On this plan in Great

Britain the attempt has been made to unite not only evangelical Protestants, but even Protestants and Romanists in the same schools. This plan has satisfied no party, and though still persisted in, has proved in a great measure a failure. It is peculiarly inappropriate for this country. Because as we are obliged to act on the principle of excluding no class of the people from the common school, this common standard of doctrine, is of necessity that with which the very lowest and loosest of the sects of the country, will be satisfied. It is not only the Episcopalian, Romanist, Presbyterian, Methodists or Baptist that must be satisfied, but Socinians, Universalists, and even Infidels. An immediate out-cry is made about religious liberty, and the union of church and state, if in a public school any religious instruction is given to which any of these parties object.

This has led to the plan of confining the instruction of the schools to secular branches exclusively, and leaving the parent or pastor to look after the religious education of the children. This is becoming the popular theory in this country. It is already difficult, in many places, to retain even the reading of the scriptures in the public schools. The whole system is in the hands of men of the world, in many of our states, and is avowedly secular. Now with regard to this scheme it may be remarked that it is a novel and fearful experiment. The idea of giving an education to the children of a country from which religion is to be excluded, we believe to be peculiar to the nineteenth century. Again, it is obvious that education without religion, is irreligious. It cannot be neutral, and in fact is not neutral. The effort to keep out religion from all the books and all the instructions, gives them of necessity an irreligious and infidel character. Again, the common school is the only place of education for a large class of our people. They have neither parental nor pastoral instruction to supply its deficiency or correct its influence. Again, this plan is so repugnant to the convictions of the better part of the community that its introduction into our colleges has been strenuously resisted. Where is the Christian parent who would send his son to a college from which religion was banished, in which there were no prayers, no preaching of the gospel, no biblical instruction? But if we shrink from such an ungodly mode of education for the few who enjoy the advantages of a classical education, why should we consent to the great mass of the chil-

dren of the country, being subjected to this system in the common schools? Under the plea and guise of liberty and equality, this system is in fact in the highest degree tyrannical. What right has the state, a majority of the people, or a mere clique, which in fact commonly control such matters, to say what shall be taught in schools which the people sustain? What more right have they to say that no religion shall be taught, than they have to say that popery shall be taught? Or what right have the people in one part, to control the wishes and convictions of those of another part of a state as to the education of their own children? If the people of a particular district choose to have a school in which the Westminster or the Heidelberg catechism is taught, we cannot see on what principle of religious liberty, the state has a right to interfere and say it shall not be done; if you teach your religion, you shall not draw your own money from the public fund? This appears to us a strange doctrine in a free country; and yet it is, if we mistake not, the practical working of the popular systems in every part of the Union. We are not disposed to submit to any such dictation. We cannot see with any patience the whole school system of a state, with all its mighty influence, wielded by a secretary of state, or school commissioner, or by a clique of unitarian or infidel statesmen, as the case may be. We regard this whole theory of a mere secular education in the common schools, enforced by the penalty of exclusion from the public funds and state patronage, as unjust and tyrannical, as well as infidel in its whole tendency. The people of each district have the right to make their schools as religious as they please; and if they cannot agree, they have the right severally of drawing their proper proportion of the public stock.

The conviction, we are persuaded, is fast taking possession of the minds of good people that the common school system is rapidly assuming not a mere negative, but a positively anti-christian character; and that in self-defence, and in the discharge of their highest duty to God and their country, they must set themselves against it, and adopt the system of parochial schools; schools in which each church shall teach fully, fairly and earnestly what it believes to be the truth of God. This is the only method in which a religious education has hitherto ever been given to the mass of the people of any country, and the novel

experiment of this age and country, is really an experiment to see what will be the result of bringing up the body of the people in ignorance of God and his word. For if religion is banished from the common school it will be excluded from the whole educational training of a large part of the population. It is an attempt to apply to the whole country, what Girard has prescribed for his college. Under these circumstances the church of every denomination is called upon to do its duty, which is nothing more or less than to teach the people Christianity, and if this cannot otherwise be done thoroughly and effectually, as we are persuaded it cannot, than by having a school in connexion with every congregation, then it is the duty of the church to enter upon that plan and to prosecute it with all her energy. It is often said that we cannot argue from the case of European countries to our own. But the Free Church of Scotland has taught us that it is not only in established churches that the system of parochial schools is feasible. The devoted men who are laying the foundation of the new system in Scotland, never imagined that their duty would be done if they planted a pastor and a church in every parish. They at once, and with equal strength of conviction and purpose, set about establishing a school in connexion with every church. It is as much a part of their system as having ministers or elders. And it should be ours also. A school of this kind, established and controlled by the session of the church, becomes a nursery for the church, the ministry and the whole land. Its blessings are not confined to any one denomination. The people are so anxious to get a good education for their children, that they will not hesitate to send them to a Presbyterian school, if that is the cheapest and best. Do we not see Romish schools crowded with Protestant children, attracted by the reputation of the teacher or the facility of acquiring some trifling accomplishment? If we do not adopt this course, others will. If Presbyterians do not have schools of their own, other denominations will soon have the education of Presbyterian children. Romanists are every where setting up for themselves; and as the principle on which they act commends itself to the judgment and conscience of good people, other denominations will soon follow their example.

The objection on the score of expense does not seem very formidable. The portion of money for each school which comes

from the public treasury is, in most of our states, very small. And if the several denominations adopt the plan of parochial schools, the state will soon be forced to the obviously just method of a proportionate distribution of the public funds, whether derived from taxation or lands or a capital stock. A beginning has been made on this plan in New York, in favour of the Romanists, and what has been granted to them cannot long be withheld from others. But even if we are to be permanently cut off from all support from the state, still the expense can be borne. Any good parochial school would soon sustain itself, and be able to afford gratuitous instruction to those who need it. Nor can we see that we should thus isolate ourselves. We have too many points of contact with the community of which we form a part, to admit of any such isolation. Action and reaction to any degree that is healthful to us or useful to others cannot fail to be kept up. Our having separate churches, pastors and church courts, do not make us a separate people in the country, and we see not why having separate schools should produce that effect. The greatest practical objection to the plan proposed would seem to be the minute division of the population into sects. In reference to this difficulty we would only remark, that a population that can sustain a church is large enough to have a school; and secondly, if the school be good its support will not be confined to Presbyterians. Methodists and Baptists will not refuse to educate their children at all rather than send to a school under the charge of Presbyterians. All experience shows this to be true. We sincerely hope, therefore, that the plan proposed by the report, and sanctioned by the Assembly may be adopted and strenuously prosecuted by the churches. Let the session of the church look out for a competent teacher; let them prescribe the course of instruction, making the Bible and the Catechism a regular part of every day's studies, and we doubt not the plan will meet the concurrence of the people and the blessing of God.

*Foreign Missions.*

Mr. Lowrie, the Secretary of the Board, laid the report for the last year upon the table, and in an interesting discourse gave a general outline of their past operations and of their plans for the future. After noticing the death of several members and