

A

KNOWLEDGE OF THE BIBLE

IMPORTANT TO YOUTH,

CONSIDERED IN ITS MORAL AND POLITICAL TENDENCY.

A Sermon,

PREACHED AT A MEETING OF THE SCHOLARS, TEACHERS, INSPECTORS,

AND COMMISSIONERS OF COMMON SCHOOLS, IN SALEM,

FEBRUARY 26, 1824.

MONCTEST
BY ALEXANDER PROUDFIT, D. D.

*He appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they
should make them known to their children.PSALM lxxviii. 5.*

*And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able
to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Christ Je-
sus.....2 TIM. iii. 15.*

SALEM, N. Y.

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To the Hon. Stephen Van Rensselaer,

Whose privilege it was *from a child to know the holy scriptures* ; who has been enabled in the various elevated stations which he has occupied and still occupies, eminently to *adorn the doctrine of the scriptures* ; and who, by his frequent and munificent benefactions, has exerted an important influence in promoting their diffusion, the following discourse, intended to recommend them to the more general attention of the youth in our common schools, is inscribed,

With the most profound respect,

By his unfeigned, although unworthy friend,

And very obliged servant,

THE AUTHOR.

Salem, March 6th, 1824.

A SERMON, &c.

DEUTERONOMY, VI. 6, 7.

*And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart ;
and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children.*

In the fifth verse, we are commanded to *love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our might*. Love constitutes the essence of religion, and may be pronounced the noblest passion which ever expanded the bosom of man, or of angel ; but on what object can our affections centre with such propriety as upon the *King Eternal, Immortal, and Invisible* ; a being infinitely glorious, possessing every attribute and excellence, which can excite our admiration, or command our confidence, or secure our esteem ; a being also from whose overflowing fulness we derive every blessing, whether temporal or spiritual ; all that we experience on earth, or anticipate through eternity. Love is the religion of Heaven ; in those blissful regions this principle exerts its most genial, elevating, and attractive influence, binding man to man, binding angel to angel, and all the hosts of Heaven in one harmonious concert, to the ever-living-ever-loving God, as the source of perfection, and happiness, and glory. In this imperfect, militant state, fellow christians, our love to our Saviour and God, is shamefully languid, because our conceptions of his glories are so limited ; but hereafter, when we shall *see as we are seen, and know as we are known*, our hearts will be completely absorbed in the admiration of his excellencies, as the ray of light becomes merged in the radiance of the noon-day sun.

These words, mentioned in the sixth verse, may perhaps be considered as referring to the decalogue, or ten commandments : They had been recently written *by the finger*, the immediate power of God, upon tables of stone ; and delivered over to Moses for the use

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of Israel, and of all succeeding ages. These may be regarded as a most precious, venerable document, not merely as the Lord God was the author, but also as they were probably the first writing ever executed in our world, and all the writing now used among men is merely an imitation of that as the model. Thus it appears that as the art of speaking, so the art of writing is celestial in its origin; it is derived immediately *from the Father of lights*, the author of every endowment by which man is exalted above the inanimate, and irrational worlds. It would perhaps be difficult to form an estimate of the comparative excellence of these two arts; the faculty of speech can be exerted more promptly, and by it we are capable of holding intercourse with those around us with less inconvenience; by the art of writing we can converse with persons at a distance, we can communicate our views to millions at the same time; nay, we can send down our thoughts to generations unborn.

These words may also be considered as referring to the whole system of revealed truth; all that was written through successive ages by holy men of God, speaking as they *were moved by the Holy Ghost*. This whole revelation, comprehending the two testaments, forms one complete canon; one perfect system of principle and practice, designed for the edification of the church, until her militant state on earth is exchanged for the full perfection of heavenly glory.

These words shall be in thine heart. It is an unspeakable privilege to have the Bible in our world; to possess this disclosure of the divine will relative to the method of our redemption. It is also an unspeakable privilege to possess the scriptures in our own language, and in our respective houses, but we ought not to rest satisfied with these external advantages; we should aim at having them *in our hearts*; we should be frequently and affectionately revolving them in our thoughts; we ought to make them the subject of our daily and delightful contemplation, until every motive, and desire, and hope is moulded into the very letter, and spirit of the Bible.

And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children. This is the member of the verse to which your attention is more immediately invited on the present occasion, which must be regarded by all as an occasion of more than ordinary interest and magnitude. I see around me a host of young immortals, many of whom have merely stepped on the threshold of being; they possess faculties which are just beginning to unfold, but which must continue to unfold and expand through ever revolving ages. And who knows but their destinies both here and hereafter may depend, in some degree, on the instructions now to be imparted? *May the Spirit of God and of glory, who originally wrote these words on the tables of stone, now engrave them indelibly on the tables of their hearts, while I attempt to show,*

I. Why the Scriptures should be taught *diligently* to our children; and inquire,

II. On whom this duty is incumbent.

1. The scriptures should be *taught to our children*, as they are a most authentic, historical record. If man is placed in an insulated situation, excluded from any acquaintance with the transactions of ages which are past, if his attention is confined to events which occur in his own period of time, and under his own eyes, how comparatively contracted must be his knowledge! How ignorant must he necessarily remain, not only of things which happened in the world of which he is an inhabitant, but in the very family of which he is a member! His knowledge of mankind must be limited in a great measure to those who reside in his own vicinity, and almost to the few with whom he is in the habit of associating. But by the aid which history affords, all preceding generations are presented obviously before him; he becomes familiar with poets, and philosophers, and moralists who have entertained, and enlightened, and adorned the world not only in the most distant parts of the earth, but in the remotest periods of time; he discovers the enormity of vice in the degradation and misery into which it has plunged individuals, and families, and communities;

and he sees also the real excellence of piety and virtue, in the happiness of those by whom they have been duly cultivated. But of all the historical records which have enlarged our acquaintance with men and things, the Bible is beyond comparison the most satisfactory. In the Koran of Mahomed, in the Shasters of the eastern Bramin, in the tales of the Egyptian Magi, and in the numerous volumes of Græcian and Roman story, we have some account of the earlier ages of the world, and of the most memorable events which successively occurred; but how confused, how contradictory, and in many instances how grossly absurd do they appear! They are to the inquiring mind as the obscure glimmering of twilight to the natural eye. We can merely conjecture from them that such events have taken place, without being able to ascertain the origin, or order, or manner, or design of their existence. But amidst that radiance which the lamp of revelation sheds around, the whole scene is brought distinctly to our view. We can look back to the commencement of time, and see this world with all the variety and richness of its furniture coming forth into existence at the command of the Great First Cause; we can discover not merely the time *when* every species of being arose out of nothing, but the exact order of their creation, and the station which each was designed by the sovereign, infinitely wise Creator to occupy in his world. Compare for a moment the account of the origin of all things given by Moses, with the fabulous conjectures of heathen historians and poets, and the contrast appears greater than between the momentary, precarious glare of the meteor and the regular radiance of the sun. In the first chapter of Genesis how minutely, and satisfactorily can we trace the progress of the Creator, step by step, in the mighty work, from the first production of matter to the final completion of the whole system!

There is one circumstance, relating to the creation of man, as recorded by the sacred historian, particularly entitled to our consideration, as it presents a most interesting display of the divine wisdom and be-

nignty. Adam, our great ancestor, is not called into being on the first, or second, or even third day; his creation is suspended until every thing was formed which could contribute to his convenience and comfort. The earth is separated from the waters and the *dry land appears*, upon which he might walk; afterwards the *firmament* or atmosphere is formed, affording a pure element in which he might breathe; afterwards the *greater and the lesser lights* are created, which might not only serve to cheer the eye, but direct him in the ordinary employments of life; and when every preparation is thus made for his comfortable and honourable accommodation, man, the destined lord of this lower world, is created and introduced to the possession of his empire. The palace is erected, it is garnished in a manner the most sumptuous and magnificent, it is replenished with every variety of furniture, a rich profusion of all that could minister to the happiness of man is provided, and afterwards Adam the rightful heir is placed in the full occupancy of his inheritance.

It is worthy of notice that, in his history of the creation, Moses does not commence his narrative by asserting that there is a God, but simply relates that *in the beginning God made the heavens and the earth*. The belief of a great original Cause is a principle interwoven with our nature, it is incorporated with every faculty of the rational, immortal mind, and has therefore been uniformly avowed by every nation under heaven. The members of the great family of mankind which have been scattered over the face of the earth, from age to age, have differed from each other in a thousand circumstances; they have varied, and they still vary in colour, in feature, in size of body, in secular pursuits, in intellectual powers, in literary attainments and in their outward modes of worship; but all the unnumbered inhabitants of our world have united in their belief and acknowledgment of a God. Extraordinary as the fact may appear, it is not less true than extraordinary, that an atheist is a monster to be found only in Christian countries; and his faith, if

he has any, must be considered the result of the complete triumph of depravity over conscience, and reason, and revelation.

The causes of various phenomena, both in the physical and moral world, which are unaccountable to unenlightened reason, are disclosed in a manner the most satisfactory in the historical parts of the Bible. Sages among the heathen have always acknowledged that some fatal disaster must have happened to our system. By those earthquakes which sometimes shake our globe to its centre ; by the volcanoes which occasionally rend it, threatening to empty it of its bowels ; by the tornado whose fearful, wasteful career spreads desolation over its surface, and prostrates the proudest monuments of human enterprize ; by those eclipses under which the heavenly luminaries appear often to labor ; by those nameless and innumerable diseases which prey upon the body of man, and by the cares which distract, and those foul passions which frequently agitate and infuriate his soul, they have conjectured and even concluded that neither the natural, nor the moral world now appears as when it first proceeded from the hand of an all-wise, benevolent Creator. Yet, when this disaster happened, or how it should have happened, all the philosophers who were the pride of the countries in which they respectively arose, could not even conjecture. But from the history of the Bible we learn precisely when the mournful catastrophe took place, and what produced it. Here we are taught that *by one man*, through the seductions of a fallen angel, *sin entered into our world* which brought upon us death with all our disorders and woes.

Thus I am free to assert that as an historical document, venerable for its antiquity, undeniable in its evidence, concise, yet distinct in its narrative, consistent in all its parts, comprehensive in its range, reaching back to the commencement, and by its prophecies carrying us forward to the consummation of time, the Bible is a book in which our youth ought early to be instructed.

2. The scriptures are most suitable and profi-

table for youth as they exhibit exalted specimens of the beautiful and sublime in composition. The Creator has formed the human mind susceptible of enjoyment from various sources, but perhaps from scarcely any source do we derive pleasures either more rational, or refined, or exquisite than from the contemplation of objects lofty in their nature. With what emotions of rapture do we gaze on the "concaved" heavens, or on the ocean as it spreads unbounded before us, or on the river rolling on in its majesty, filling and occasionally overflowing its banks, or on the cataract breaking abruptly over the rugged precipice, and foaming and thundering along in its course; or on the lofty mountain which apparently cleaves the heavens with its summit. But, probably, nothing which may be connected with the sublime, affords pleasure more exalted or ennobling in its tendency than that of composition. Thus the descriptions of Homer in his *Iliad*, and of Virgil in his *Pastorals*, and more particularly in his *Æneid*, and of Milton, in his *Paradise Lost*, have been regarded as distinguished models of the sublime, and as such have been recommended to the study of youth, from age to age, for their intellectual improvement and gratification. But in the estimation of every competent, and impartial critic, all the writings of uninspired men, ancient or modern, fall short of the sacred scriptures in point of sublimity whether we regard the matter or manner. The very subjects there presented to our contemplation are inconceivably grand, and calculated to interest, and elevate, and improve the youthful mind. There we read of the great God with his various perfections; all underived, independent and infinite; as the *only Potentate, only having immortality, the same yesterday*, existing necessarily, and essentially from eternity past, *and to day, and for ever; preparing his throne in the heavens, dwelling in light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen or can see; creating the worlds by the breath of his mouth, upholding all things by the word of his power, opening his hand, and satisfying the desires of every living thing; in the scriptures also is brought to view*

tian, but even by heathen critics. Longinus, in his dissertation on the sublime, has selected passages from Moses as excelling in this respect.

3. The Scriptures should be taught to our youth as exhibiting the most perfect system of morality.— The golden sayings of Pythagoras, and the morals of Seneca, and Cicero's discourses on the nature of the gods, and the volumes of Aristotle contain many admirable maxims for human conduct, and when considered as the production of men destitute of the light of divine truth, they are an eternal rebuke to the licentious writings of many who have been born, and educated in Christian countries.

Yet, whether we regard the motives of action which these moralists present, or the considerations by which their duties are enforced, there is nothing extravagant in the assertion that their doctrines fall infinitely short of the morality of the Bible. The attributes of the Deity, as exhibited by the inspired writers, his justice, his holiness, his truth, his benignity, his forbearance towards man, notwithstanding our infinite imperfections, and the riches of his mercy, as manifested in pardoning the penitent, are calculated powerfully to inspire with the love of justice, to charm with the beauties of holiness, with the excellence of charity, and to excite in the youthful bosom a correspondent hatred of injustice, of oppression, of impurity, of deceit in all its forms, and of every species of intolerance and revenge. Who can unfeelingly oppress a fellow creature, or contemplate unmelted the miseries of another when he attentively reads that the *Lord God is merciful, gracious, ready to pardon iniquity, that he is full of pity, that in all the afflictions of his people he is afflicted, and that his mercies are from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him.*

In the preceptive parts of the holy oracles our duty is fully defined and enforced in our various associations, and in all the relations in which we stand, whether to God, or to each other, or to ourselves.— As creatures we are required to love that almighty, infinitely beneficent Being who gave us existence, who

assigned us a rank so distinguished among the works of his hands, and who has rendered the other parts of his creation tributary to our happiness. As christians we are called, by obligations the most reasonable and irresistible, to serve him who provided for our recovery from the ruins of our apostacy, who freely justifies the guilty, who adopts the rebel into the tender relation of a child, who sympathises with us amidst the complicated sorrows of life, and has prepared mansions of glory beyond the grave, and who accomplished all this redemption by the sufferings and sacrifice of *his own Son* in our covenant-room. As children of a common family, with our interests intimately interwoven, and connected by relations innumerable and tender, we have our duty clearly defined and imperatively enjoined. The son is there commanded *to obey his parents in the Lord, to honor his father and mother*; and parents are enjoined in their turn *not to provoke their children to wrath*, to provide for their temporal wants, and to *bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*. The husband is there required to *love his wife*, and the wife *to reverence her husband*, and both to cultivate reciprocal esteem and affection by *living together as heirs of the grace of life*. In the sacred canon the magistrate and the master are taught their duty to those who are placed under them, and the citizen and the servant to obey the commands and promote the interests of such as *are over them in the Lord*.

But there is one excellence of the scriptures for promoting morality above every human production, all that is enjoined in their precepts is recommended to our practice by some living example. While the deformity of sin, its hideous, forbidding features, with the miseries induced by it, are strongly marked in the history of the murderous Cain, of the lascivious Sodomites, of the merciless brethren of Joseph, of the avaricious Balaam, of the unnatural Absalom, of the intriguing, treacherous Judas, the charms of piety, with its rewards, are impressively presented in the narrative of Abraham, of Lot, of Job, of Jabez, of Ja-

cob, of Joseph, of Moses, of Solomon, and of a host of others whose names with their virtuous deeds are recorded on the pages of both testaments. Thus while the scriptures explicitly command, *render to all their due, give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's, follow peace with all men, love as brethren, be kindly affectioned one to another, be merciful as your Father in heaven is merciful*, they always present some character in whom these graces and virtues illustriously shone. We are thereby instructed that while the cultivation of these principles is a duty incumbent, they are really practicable, and the practice of them is accompanied with an ample reward.

Permit me also to notice that for the light which they shed on our interests, civil, social, and political, our youth ought early to be instructed in the doctrines of the bible. They inform us that the great *God made originally of one blood all men who dwell upon the earth*; that all are therefore possessed of rights equal and unalienable; that these rights ought to be recognized, and consequently that resistance on the part of the citizen or subject becomes lawful when an infraction on their civil immunities is wantonly, and perseveringly made by their rulers. It is therefore remarked by a very distinguished scholar and philanthropist and statesman* of our own country, that "Christianity in its essence, its doctrines, and its form is republican: It teaches our descent from a common parent; it inculcates the natural equality of mankind, and it points to our origin, and end; to our nativity, and our graves, and to our immortal destinies as illustrations of this impressive truth." All who are versed in the history of the world will readily acknowledge that in proportion as the Bible has been diffused through the mass of the population in any country, there the human mind has undergone an almost instantaneous expansion; the principles of civil liberty have revived, the natural rights of all have been recognized, usurpation on the

* The Hon. DE WITT CLINTON.

part of despotic rulers has been resisted, and the chains of oppression have been gradually thrown off. Is it not obvious, therefore, that, with the revival of religion, at the commencement of the reformation, there was an immediate revival of literature, of the interests of morality, of the principles of free government, and of all that sheds a lustre on the character of man?—The progress of the various arts and sciences corresponded with the progress of the Bible. In parts of Ireland, and Germany, and France; more especially in England, and Scotland, and Holland, where the Scriptures were then translated into the languages of the country, where they were introduced into private families, and read by the youth in common schools, while the intellectual and moral character of the inhabitants was renovated, a sense of their natural rights, and a resolution to assert them, were speedily evinced. A celebrated writer on the laws of nations,* therefore, remarks that “Christianity has prevented the establishment of despotism in Ethiopia,” and Hume, an avowed and virulent enemy of our religion, acknowledges “that the precious sparks of liberty were kindled and preserved by the Puritans in England, and to them the English owe the whole freedom of their constitution;” and by these same Puritans was the foundation laid in this new world, upon which the splendid edifice of our republican institutions was afterwards reared up.

But there is another and still weightier reason why the Scriptures should be taught to our youth; and that is

4. As they constitute the great means of salvation. This I pronounce the principal reason, because the soul is incomparably more precious than the body, and the interests of eternity infinitely more important than all that concerns us in the present world. The Bible therefore alone surpasses in value all the other volumes with which the earth has been deluged. We admire the orations of Cicero and Demosthenes as rare

* Baron Montesquieu.

specimens of eloquence, and recommend them to the perusal of our youth; we admire the histories of Sallust and Livy and Tacitus as models of purity and simplicity in that species of composition; we appreciate the writings of Plato and Aristotle who reasoned, and of Homer and Virgil who sang successively in Greece and Rome. The productions of these immortal authors we recommend to the attention of youth in our common schools and higher seminaries of learning; but in neither of these volumes is the interesting interrogatory solved, "wherewith shall I come before the Lord? how can I expect reconciliation to that Being whose favor is life, and whose frown is more dreadful than death?" These are questions in which every youth in every school through our country is equally and everlastingly interested; yet they are questions which no other book than the Bible has even attempted to answer. Approach the orators, and poets, and sages who alternately adorned either Egypt, or Greece, or Rome, during the periods of their literary glory; approach either of them, I say, in the hour of anguish, and ask them, "how shall sinful man, become just with God?" Ask the oracles of Delos, or Delphos, or Argos where the deluded votary sought relief in the hour of conscious guilt, and each of them will reply, "it is not in me to answer." Ask the Hobbes, or Humes, or Voltaires, or Volneys, or Paines, who have impiously, and I may say, cruelly endeavored to sneer us out of our belief of the Bible, but none of them has hardihood to reply, "I can solve the interesting inquiry." With sacrilegious hands they have seized, and attempted to pull down those massy pillars upon which the edifice of our immortal hopes is supported, but they never offered to show us any other foundation for our hope. With their mingled sophistry, and ribaldry, and blasphemies they endeavored to obscure, and even extinguish this lamp of salvation, whose irradiations have illumined the path, and cheered the eye, and brightened the hopes of millions of pilgrims in their journeyings through this dreary wilderness, this vale of sorrows, but success in their infernal enterprise

must have involved us in darkness more dense than the gloom of midnight.

I appreciate human learning, and lament that I have not been more avaricious for its acquisition, but I appreciate the learning of the Bible ten-thousand-fold more. I wish to see my children educated in the literature of the age; to see their intellect expanded, and their memories enriched from the exhaustless treasures of human erudition, yet first of all, and above all, I desire to see them taught the rudiments of that *gospel which brings life and immortality to light*; which shows them how they may be reconciled unto God, how they may serve him acceptably here, and enjoy him eternally in the regions of glory. I can most cordially avow my acquiescence in the creed of a heathen philosopher, who had been converted to the christian faith, and afterwards eminently adorned the primitive church, "*Si Christum scio, nihil est quod nescio; sed si Christum nescio, nihil est quod scio*": If I know Christ, it is of little consequence what I know not; but if I know not Christ, it is of little importance what I do know." Paul therefore in his last letter to Timothy his own son, by spiritual generation, and his companion *in the labors of the gospel*, reminds him of this as his distinguishing privilege, "that from a child he had known the holy scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." This law of Jehovah is perfect, converting the soul; this testimony is sure, making wise the simple; these statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; these commandments of the Lord are pure, enlightening the eyes." In this record patriarchs, and prophets, and evangelists, and apostles, speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, unfold a scheme by which the most guilty may obtain remission; the anxious conscience may find a *peace which passeth understanding*; the alien may enjoy the adoption of a son, and the spiritual pilgrim, weary with the corruptions, and vexations, and sorrows of life, may look forward to mansions of peace and purity and joy eternal in the heavens.

Before this part of the discourse is dismissed I feel constrained to notice that the scriptures cannot be taught too early to our offspring. The popular objection that children should be permitted to grow up unbiassed by the influence of religious education, and left to choose their principles afterwards for themselves, is scarcely worthy of a serious reply. Does it not argue equally against every species of learning? With the same propriety it may be asserted; that we ought not to instruct them in the improvements which have been made by experiment in medicine, or chemistry, or philosophy, or any of the sciences, but rather leave them to hesitate between these modern discoveries and the crude notions of the ancients on these subjects. Surely if the attention of parents ought to be exercised in early giving to the minds of their children proper notions about things temporal, should they not much rather be exercised in giving them correct information respecting the greater concerns of eternity? Therefore it is the divine command "Train up a child in the way he should go; bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The mother of the famous doctor Doddridge taught him the history of the old and new testaments before he was capable of reading: the mother of the excellent John Newton had stored his memory with chapters and portions of scripture and catechisms and hymns when he was four years old, from which, he mentions, I was greatly profited afterwards. Surely if the dear little children in our schools are not too young to die and to be judged; if they are not too young to be tormented in the miseries of hell, or to become partakers of the unmingled pleasures of heaven, they cannot be considered too young to be instructed in those scriptures which the Holy Ghost ordinarily employs as the instrument of converting and supporting and saving the human soul. If, like Jeremiah, and John the Baptist, they are capable of being *sanctified from their mother's womb*, who will forbid that their understandings should be early enriched with that living word which is the principal means of their edification and comfort.

II. But, on whom is this duty incumbent? was our second inquiry, and to this your attention is now respectfully invited.

1. This duty is incumbent on parents themselves. I have noticed that the obligation of attending to the spiritual *nurture and admonition* of their offspring rests primarily on parents themselves, because they are more nearly related to them than any others to whose care they can be committed, and as the instruments of their existence, they are under the first and highest obligation to promote whatever interests them for both worlds. It is thus the divine declaration, "he that provideth not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." On them it is primarily incumbent to feed their offspring, to clothe them, to preserve their health, to protect their character, to regulate their conduct, to cultivate their understandings, and also by the communication of scriptural knowledge, to aim at promoting their eternal salvation. The Author of our nature has manifested infinite wisdom in forming parents with an ardent, almost inextinguishable affection for their children, and solicitude for their welfare: thus they are not only impelled to advance their interests from a sense of duty, but constrained to it from inclination. All the diligence and self-denial which they must necessarily exercise in promoting the welfare of their children, which would otherwise be a drudgery, now become their delight.

Besides, parents enjoy the most favorable opportunity of attending to the instruction of their children. Their offspring are naturally thrown upon their care in their infancy; they are more constantly under their eye; a sense of its dependence prepares the child for receiving with greater respect and affection advice tendered by a parent than by any other, and thus probably more profit has been derived by the rising generation from the seasonable and judicious admonitions of a father and mother, than from the combined exertions of relatives, or teachers, or ministers. As the pastor of a congregation, during a period of near-

ly thirty years, I have rarely been successful in giving a proper direction to the morals of youth under my care, without the concurrence and co-operation of their parents, and it will be acknowledged by all who are extensively acquainted with mankind, that in the private family the foundation is usually laid of all that is excellent either in the church or in the world. Although parents may with propriety employ teachers to assist them in conducting the education of their children, they ought never to consider themselves exempted from the most painful and unremitting attention to their interests. A profound philosopher* and historian of Greece has therefore remarked, "that it is a fault much to be condemned in parents to think themselves discharged from watching over their children, as soon as they are put into the hands of masters. They ought still to attend to their progress both in study and virtue." With what affection, therefore, does a Christian monarch expostulate with a favorite son, and the expected successor to his throne, "thou Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind:" and it is testified, to the honor of Abraham, *the father of the faithful, I know him that he will command his children, and his household after him, to keep the ways of the Lord.*

2. This duty is incumbent also on those who officiate in the capacity of public teachers. Although we have mentioned that a careful attention to the religious instruction of children was binding first on their immediate parents, this is by no means to be understood to the exemption of teachers or masters.—Parents, in sending their offspring to school, resign for a time their own charge to the direction of the superintendent of such school; they deliver them up to his management to be instructed, and admonished, and even corrected at his discretion. The teacher of the school becomes in a certain sense a substitute for the father and mother, and is obligated to cherish a paren-

Plutarch.

tal tenderness for the youth, and a concern for promoting his real interests. The authority of the latter is then transferred to the former, and whatever in relation to doctrine, or discipline, was formerly binding on the one is now binding on the other. I feel a greater confidence in pressing this consideration from the following observations of a celebrated scholar and moralist in France,* who was himself occupied in the tuition of youth: "A good master must apply to himself those words which God was constantly repeating to Moses, the conductor of his people, carry them in thy bosom as a nurse beareth her sucking child; he will employ his time in teaching them to know Christ, his precepts, his principles, and remedies; in thoroughly explaining the gospel; in making them acquainted with the great and precious truths of religion; how terrible God is in his judgments! how dreadful their condition must be who lose his favor irrecoverably! how black those sins are which are committed after baptism! what holiness the law requires in those who are buried with Christ, washed in his blood, and consecrated by the infusion of his Spirit!" Again, speaking of the instruction which teachers ought to communicate to their scholars, he asks, "whence can we deduce these points of divine knowledge but from the Old and New Testament?" Such are the directions given to the teachers of youth by one who had the honor of presiding over a literary institution the most distinguished on the earth, and, although a Catholic by profession, he may be considered an ornament to his country, to his age, to the elevated station which he occupied, and even to human nature. Would to God that his admirable directions relative to the duties of the masters of schools were more generally regarded. How soon would the moral character of the population of our country be improved; with what confidence might parents in the morning entrust the instruction of their beloved offspring to men thus solicitous to advance their spiritual interests? With what

Rollin, late principal of the University in Paris.

composure might patriots, and philanthropists, and moralists, in their declining years leave the destinies of the church, and of their country, to a generation thus nurtured in the doctrine of their obligation to God, and to each other.

With great deference, yet from a full conviction of duty, I therefore offer it as my opinion that a chapter of the sacred scriptures should be read daily in every school, under the direction of the preceptor; *read* by all the scholars in a collective capacity, not indeed, as an ordinary school-exercise, but as an act of homage to Him who solemnly commands, *search the scriptures*, and as a tribute of respect to that production of which Jehovah is immediately the Author; *read* also for the purpose of inspiring our youth with an early veneration for that divine record; of instructing them in doctrines infinitely important for every scholar to know, of solemnizing their hearts, of purifying and elevating their affections above the sordid pursuits of this world; of regulating their conduct to their God, to their parents, to their companions, to the community of which they are shortly to become members, and under the divine benediction, of preparing them for the exercises and joys of that eternal world to which they are approaching.

3. This duty is incumbent on the ministers of religion. Although they are called principally *to preach the word; to be instant in season, and out of season, reproving, rebuking, and exhorting*, yet without doubt the instruction of the rising generation constitutes an important part of ministerial service. Besides, it may be expected that their authority, combined with that of parents and preceptors of schools, will make a deeper and more lasting impression on the hearts of the young. Thus Peter, after his restoration to the apostleship, received from his Lord the explicit command, "*feed my lambs; they are the rising hopes of the flock, out of which my fold is hereafter to be replenished, therefore be attentive to their interests, and dispense to them the sincere milk of the word as the means of their spiritual nurture and growth.*" This was a la-

bor to which our Master himself, "the great minister of the sanctuary," particularly attended while he tabernacled on earth. With that meekness and affection which so eminently characterized his conduct, we find him inviting *little children to come to him, taking them up in his arms, and blessing them*; and while he pronounced his benediction he was probably imparting instructions suited to their capacities and age.— We behold him in the temple countenancing *the little children* while they lisp forth *their hosannas*, and asking the fastidious Pharisees, as they rebuked them, *have ye never read, out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?* We hear *the great apostle* speaking of *little children*, in the church of Galatia, *for whom he travailed in birth again until Christ was formed in them*; and how often does the beloved evangelist mention with affection *little children, whom he loved in the truth*; and while he admonishes *fathers, and young men*, he sends his most affectionate salutation to *little children who had known the Father*. Were it necessary to multiply arguments for urging this duty to the attention of the ministers of religion, I might mention that some of the most eminent lights who appeared after the introduction of the Christian dispensation, were almost exclusively occupied in this service. Origin, Ireneus, Augustine and others, who immediately succeeded the apostles, and constituted the glory of Zion in their respective ages, were chiefly distinguished as catechists or teachers of youth.

1st. We learn from this passage the awful responsibility which rests upon those to whom the instruction of youth is intrusted; on parents, and preceptors of schools, and the ambassadors of Christ. Hear the injunction of Almighty God, delivered more than three thousand years since: "These words which I command thee shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children;" and can this requirement be considered less binding on us in the present period of the world? Are not the souls of our children, although Gentiles, as precious as were the souls of the children of the Jews, to whom the com-

mand was originally given? Are not the youth who are born into the world in the present age as ignorant, as fallen, as prone to folly, as averse to what is morally and spiritually good as they were in that age, and consequently in equal need of our zeal, and prudence, and perseverance in teaching them, and leading them both by precept and example in the paths of righteousness? Nay, I would respectfully ask, is not our responsibility much greater, because our facilities for imparting religious instruction are incomparably increased? Parents and other teachers then had only the books of Moses, but in addition to them we have the *Psalms*, the *Proverbs*, which are intended as a system of moral tuition for youth, the writings of prophets, and evangelists, and apostles, with many discourses which were delivered by our Master himself. As the art of printing was unknown at that time, there was not probably more than a solitary copy of the law for the use of each tribe among the Israelites; but in the present age, which is exalted in the enjoyment of the outward means of instruction above every preceding age of the world, copies of the sacred volume are multiplied; they are circulated through every settlement, and even brought to the possession of every family, and owing to the establishment of schools in every section of our town with competent teachers there is scarcely an illiterate youth among us; almost all who have attained to the age of learning are acquainted with the elementary principles of education, and are thus capable of reading the Scriptures for themselves. Such advantages in other countries are confined principally to the more opulent and honorable classes of society; but with us, through the fostering care of the civil guardians of our state, they are diffused through the different grades of our population; extended even to the most indigent.

Again, with our fidelity in training up the rising generation is involved, under the sovereign Disposer of events, all that is interesting in the church and in community, because to their management the interests of our country both civil and religious must very soon

be entrusted. As wave in the ocean succeedeth wave, so generation of mankind followeth after generation. *Our fathers*, who were instrumental in founding the church on this western continent, *where are they?* *Our fathers*, who stepped forward for the vindication of our natural rights against the inroads of oppression, who deliberated in the cabinet, who fought in the field, who offered up in the pulpit and in the closet their supplications to the God of battles for success in the honorable yet arduous conflict, and ultimately achieved our national independence, *where are they?* And is it not a very solemn reflection that the fair inheritance of freedom both civil and sacred which they acquired, with so much solicitude, and privation, and peril, and expence, and blood, and which they bequeathed to us their offspring, as the depository, we must shortly resign to the trust of another generation?—Yes, most respected preceptors, from the schools which you have the honor of superintending, our pulpits, and our benches, and our bars must be, in the lapse of a few years, supplied. From these scholars, who collect around you, day after day, listening to your instructions we must look for our ministers, by whom the Scriptures are to be expounded on the sabbath, and adorned in their private deportment through the week; for our legislators, by whom wise and salutary laws must be enacted; for our magistrates, by whom justice must be administered; for our advocates, by whom the rights of injured innocence must be vindicated; for our “masters of the healing art;” for our church-officers, by whom the mysteries of religion must be dispensed; for our church members, by whom the sanctuary must be filled, and her ordinances supported; for the preceptors of our schools, and academies, and colleges, by whom another generation must be instructed in the knowledge of science and godliness. To their prudence and fidelity must be committed all our benevolent institutions which have been formed for meliorating the temporal miseries of man, and for promoting his immortal interests, and to the support of which the prayers of the pious, and the

ardor of youth, and the experience of age, and the gold and the silver of the opulent, and the mite of the widow have united to contribute: under their control must shortly be placed our asylums for the orphan, for the insane, for the deaf and the dumb, for the widow and the fatherless; our Bible Societies for supplying with the word of life the destitute at home, and for holding forth this lamp of truth to the benighted nations of the earth; and our missionary societies which are designed to send the messengers of peace to the remotest regions of the world, and to the unnumbered millions who inhabit it. Ah! how important, when considered in this light, are the interests of the youthful population of our country, and how awful beyond description is our responsibility who have the charge of their education? With us it depends, under God, whether they are to remain FREE, as we are, "sitting under their own vine and beneath the shadow of their own fig tree;" enlightened, independent, weighing in the balance of sound sense the specious pretensions of all who may solicit their suffrages for the purpose of becoming the guardians of their rights; or whether growing up ignorant, indolent, unprincipled, unsuspecting, they are to become the degraded minions of some intriguing, aspiring demagogue, or the miserable vassals of the arbitrary, unfeeling despot.

I have been adverting to the high responsibility which rests on those who have the management of youth, and I now feel constrained to add that upon you, respected teachers, no inconsiderable portion of this responsibility devolves. Common schools, altho' they appear to form only the incipient grades of education, may be regarded as the most important literary institutions in our country, and the design of all the subsequent instructions which are given in academies, in boarding schools, in colleges, in seminaries of medical science, of legal science, and of theology, is merely to complete the superstructure, the basis of which has been previously laid in them. But, in a republican government, like ours, common schools appear in a light pre-eminently interesting because the

perpetuity of our civil liberty is involved in the general diffusion of knowledge, and in the cultivation of morality and religion through the great body of our population. A nation the most illiterate, the most unprincipled and profligate may be controlled by the iron arm of despotism, but a people who expect to govern themselves must be intelligent, upright, orderly and temperate. Therefore I can avow, with all solemnity, that, although I were completely a libertine in religious principle; if I secretly regarded as mere "priestcraft" the doctrines of a future retribution, of a heaven for the penitent and holy, or of a hell for the impenitent and impure; yet merely as a republican in sentiment, recognizing the equal rights of all; as a patriot, a friend to the liberties, and prosperity, and glory of that country which gave me birth; and as a philanthropist, feeling an interest in the happiness of the human family of which I constitute a member, I would urge the introduction of the Bible into every school in our country, and the incorporation of its moral and religious principles with every mental faculty of every youth. Without making the least pretensions to the spirit of prophecy, I can readily predict that the cultivation of learning, and morality, and religion, and the blessings of free government, will be coeval in our land.

Is it therefore extravagant to hope that a becoming zeal and fidelity on the part of us, who have the care of the rising population of our country, may be honored for securing the transmission of all those immunities, which exalt us as a nation, to a thousand generations? And then as the *names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb* were written on the foundations of the *New-Jerusalem*, our names may be virtually inscribed on the walls of the literary institutions, and of the halls of legislation, and of the courts of civil justice, and of the temples of devotion which shall adorn our beloved land from age to age. Let not you or I, therefore, respected teachers, consider the least, or the lowest, or the poorest youth under our charge as beneath our attention. Every male and every female should

be regarded as a rational and immortal being ; as destined to occupy some sphere in the intellectual and moral system on earth, and through eternal ages ; and through our nurturing care may be raised up to adorn the private family, to adorn the social circle, to diffuse a salutary influence through some section of the visible church, and may ultimately become equal to an angel in the regions of glory. Excuse me while I enlarge on this most interesting subject, and ask how ample would probably be our reward in the recollection of a grateful country, and how imperishable our honor were we instrumental, by our united instructions and examples, and prayers, in raising up affectionate, dutiful wives to bless their husbands ; tender and respectful husbands, *to love their wives, and dwell with them according to knowledge* ; discreet, intelligent fathers and mothers, to train up their offspring *in the admonition of the Lord* ; enlightened, industrious, peaceful citizens, revering the laws of their country ; competent, conscientious magistrates, who shall *become a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well* ; and able, self denied, circumspect, laborious *ministers of the New Testament*, preserving the church uncorrupted in her doctrine, and worship, and discipline, and government. Who knows but there may arise from your seminaries some other Howards to explore the loathsome prison, and sooth the agony of suffering humanity in distant and different climes ; or Morrisons, and Milnes, and Martyns, to translate the *word of life* into languages in which it has never appeared ; or other Marshes, and Careys, and Swarts, who shall plant *the Rose of Sharon* in some moral desert where its beauty has never been beheld, nor its refreshing fragrance enjoyed by the miserable inhabitants. May I not look still further into futurity, and ask, who knows but in the morning of the general resurrection, some of these dear little boys or girls, mingling with the millions of the redeemed, may point to you with transport, saying to the Judge, there is the instrument of my salvation ; he taught me *diligently the holy Scriptures*, through which, as the means, I was brought to

the participation of grace upon earth, and to those unutterable glories which I now anticipate in the everlasting kingdom.

Innumerable discouragements must be expected while we attempt to perform these labors of love. Amidst our most solemn appeals to the consciences and the hearts of little children, they may appear restless, thoughtless, volatile, impatient of restraint, and when the exercise is ended we will frequently see them engage instantly in all the little sports and frivolities of youth, "giving to the wind every serious impression." But we are not warranted to conclude from such appearances, "that we have labored in vain." Hereafter by some affliction of body, or by the sudden death of a parent, or companion, or by a severe shock of adversity they may be awakened to reflection; these truths which we are now infusing into their tender hearts may be brought fresh to their recollection, and become the happy means of their conversion. Suppose for instance, that a person unacquainted with the nature of vegetation, should see the husbandman throwing his seed, his kernels of wheat or of corn into the earth, and then leaving them, would he expect from such process the production of a crop? Would he expect, after the lapse of a few weeks, to behold the fields clothed richly with verdure, or after a few months, to see them *covered over with corn*? and yet who ever judiciously sows without reaping some harvest? And the promise to the natural sower is not more positive than to the spiritual. We may as certainly expect the influences of the Holy Ghost to follow, and give efficacy to our instructions, as any agriculturalist in Salem may expect the influences of the sun or the rain to cause the seed which he deposits in the earth to spring forth. "Train up a child in the way he should go," is the divine command, and the promise is explicit, "when he is old he will not depart from it." The sinner is "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, even the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever. Be ye therefore steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in this work

of the Lord, for as much as you know that your labor shall not be in vain in the Lord."

2. It may be inferred from this passage that youth ought cheerfully, and even thankfully to receive the instructions which are given them. A promptitude on the part of teachers to communicate knowledge, ought always to be accompanied with a correspondent readiness on their part to treasure up the knowledge imparted. While the scholar is thus performing his own duty, and promoting his own interest, his seeming progress will animate to greater exertions those who are entrusted with his education. And, beloved youth, I have been speaking of the high, the awful responsibility of those who have the care of your tuition in early life, and I should be unfaithful to you and to myself did I leave unnoticed the awful responsibility which rests also upon you. Remember, my dear young friends, that every advice which you receive within the walls of this house, or of the school house, is written in heaven, it is recorded in characters indelible, in characters which will be awfully legible in the hour of final reckoning, and for those advices you must render a particular account in that hour when the Lord God of gods will appear for the judgment of the nations. Your teachers, if their instructions are not duly improved, must be summoned as witnesses against you in that dreadful, decisive moment. And there is nothing extravagant in the assertion, that, amidst all the millions of youth who are now scattered over the earth, none have greater, and very few have opportunities for their improvement in knowledge, equal to those enjoyed by yourselves. Even in the United States, which are exalted above any other spot on the globe by the general diffusion of learning, there is no other state where the situation of common schools is equally advantageous with our own. By the vigilance, and philanthropy, and liberality of the honorable our legislature, little seminaries of learning are now established at convenient distances in every town, and no man can appear in the capacity of a teacher without a previous examination by inspectors legally appointed ;

to them he must exhibit sufficient testimonials that his moral character is fair ; and them he must also satisfy that his literary qualifications are competent to the duties of that important office ; owing to the liberal provision which is made by the constituted guardians of our state, the price of tuition is reduced, the wealth of the opulent is rendered subservient to the education of the poor, the most indigent may therefore be instructed in the general elements of learning, and thus the path to knowledge, and usefulness, and respectability is equally open to all. And with such opportunities for obtaining instruction recollect that much more will be expected from you. In proportion as your present advantages are distinguishing, the expectations of your parents, of your teachers, of your ministers, of your country, shall I say, the expectations of God your Creator will be reasonably excited. "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required." When a field is cultivated with uncommon care, and toil, and expense, we naturally look for an abundant harvest to reward our exertions. Improve therefore, with all diligence, the various means of instruction which you enjoy, whether in the week, or on the Sabbath. The period of youth is your golden opportunity for laying the foundation for excellence and happiness during your continuance upon earth ; yea, your character is now forming not only for manhood, and old age, but for eternity. "Knowledge is like a tree," was the admonition of a British nobleman to a favorite son, "but, unless you plant it when you are young, it will afford you no shade when you grow old." And a late divine, who was profoundly skilled in the philosophy of human nature, and whose attention was eminently directed to the improvement of the rising generation, has remarked, that "the mind of man, in the period of youth, may be compared to a *rock*, every impression made upon it is almost indelible ; in manhood it may be compared to *wood*, when the impression may continue for a time, but is afterwards worn out ; and in old age it is like *water*, the impression is no sooner made than effaced.

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3. Attend early, and with all earnestness, to the cultivation of real religion. Every species of human learning is ornamental, and, if properly improved, will enlarge your sphere of enjoyment and usefulness, but its advantages are limited to the present life. "Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away," but living godliness, the love of Jesus the Lord "shed abroad through the heart by the Holy Ghost, is a gem which will adorn, and enrich through eternity. Remember, my dearly beloved children, when you are stretched on your "last couch," and the awful realities of a judgment to come rush irresistibly upon your view, all your acquaintance with the learning of the schools, with your grammar, your arithmetic, your geography will be unavailing; it will secure no peace to the disquieted conscience, it will impart no joy to the disconsolate heart, it will shed no cheering light on the darkness of that valley through which you must pass. The immortal spirit must take its flight from its intimate associate the body, and from every object with which it has conversed in the present world; but, neither the advantages of birth, or fortune, or education, will direct its course to any peaceful abode: Each of you must fathom the depths of the waters of Jordan, but all the light of science will bring to view *no ark of the covenant* to accompany or support you *amidst its swellings*, nor discover any Canaan of rest beyond. "You must be born again." Millions, younger than you, are probably this afternoon in the New Jerusalem, occupying its pearly palaces, walking its ivory pavements, and shining "in the beauties of holiness," but they were all *born again* before they entered it, and without the new birth there is no entrance for you.—The righteousness of the everlasting Jesus must be appropriated, and applied by a living faith. There "is a great multitude, which no man can number," surrounding the throne above, "singing the song of Moses," participating unmingled joys in the immediate vision, and fruition of God;—but, my dear young

friends, if you would draw aside the curtain which conceals from our view these invisible glories you would see no guest sitting "at the marriage supper of the Lamb" without this wedding garment; and without it there can be no admission for one of you. But, washed in the Saviour's blood, and adorned with the spotless garment of his salvation, each of you that has been admitted within this sanctuary to day shall be introduced to all the immunities of the sanctuary above. Whether the summons for your departure be offered you at midnight or at mid day, in childhood, or youth, or old age, your end will be peace. Death, which is to the impenitent and unbelieving "the king of terrors, will prove to you the messenger of joy; he will translate you from this land of shadows and sorrows to the regions of unclouded, eternal sunshine. "Fear God, therefore, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole of man;" it is his duty, and glory, and interest; it enhances, inconceivably, all the enjoyments of life; it softens the thorny path which every pilgrim must travel, in his journey to his heavenly home; and afterwards brings to the possession of "glory, and honor, and immortality." Actuated by the most disinterested solicitude for your real welfare. I solemnly declare, before this large assembly, that I would rather see you, although in the humble walks of life, like Obadiah, "fearing the Lord, from your youth; revering his laws, attending to his ordinances, consecrating your talents to his service; than, devoid of his grace, to behold you, as scholars, bearing away the literary palm, or as statesmen, controlling the councils of your country, or as conquerors, adding to the pomp of the triumphal procession, or as princes and potentates, wearing the imperial diadem. *Ah! what is a man profited, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*

With all these terrors on the one hand, and all these glories on the other, what is now your resolution? and what message do you authorise me to return to "that chief shepherd" who sent me forth this morn-

ing with the affectionate injunction, "*feed my lambs?*" May I return this evening, and on bended knees, but with elevated heart, approach him with the following report: "Compassionate Saviour, here am I, and the lambs of my flock, the dear little children whom thou hast given me; they have listened to the overtures of mercy, proposed by thine ambassador in thy name; constrained by thy love, they have cordially consecrated themselves to thy service, and are resolving to follow thee in the regeneration, to be thine voluntarily, and exclusively, and everlastingly." O, my dearly beloved youth, there is not a saint on earth but would readily offer you the "right hand of fellowship," and hail your participation of the same grace with himself; there is not a saint in heaven but would cheerfully lay aside his crown, and start from his throne, and congratulate you as an heir of all that glory to which he has attained. Ah! with what transports of joy would SAMUEL, "who ministered before the Lord being a child," or JABEZ, who "*early* called upon the God of Israel," or JEREMIAH, who was "sanctified to Jehovah from the womb," or TIMOTHY, who "from a child was acquainted savingly with the holy Scriptures; with what transports of joy would either or all of these behold you turning your faces towards Zion, and inquiring early after the Lord God of your fathers. With what ecstasy of heart, would they employ their eloquence, which is the eloquence of heaven, in describing to you the pleasures of religion, and the matchless loveliness of the Savior; in relating to you that peace which they experienced in his service upon earth, and the incomparably higher joys which they now participate when admitted to see him "face to face" in the light of immortality! How would they delight to talk to you of the tenderness of that affection which saint, in the upper sanctuary, feels towards saint, and angel to angel; and on the intimacy and endearments of that fellowship which they enjoy with each other!

Many of your companions around have lately sought and found mercy of the Lord. With pleasure unspeakable, have I seen alternately the emotions of

fear and hope, of sorrow and joy, depicted in their countenances ; I have seen the penitential tear flowing freely from their eyes, and have heard from their lips the anxious, infinitely important inquiry, *What shall I do to be saved ?* And, in this season of general excitement and alarm, can *you* remain unmoved ? While the storm is collecting and blackening on every side ; while the lightnings are blazing fearfully, and the thunders rolling, shaking the very heavens over your heads, and others, on every hand, are hastening to the shelter, to JESUS JEHOVAH, *the only covert from the storm* of vengeance, can *you* sit secure ? Shall I direct your eyes to regions more remote, and point to you the young heathen, in various directions, pressing eagerly into the kingdom, and then ask, will you, dare you remain unconcerned ? Ah ! what agony unutterable would rend your hearts, beloved youth, ye who are educated in Salem, ye who are the offspring of the followers of the Lamb, to behold the little Osage, or Cherokee, or Hindoo, or Hottentot, or the young Laplander, or Iceland, in the kingdom of God, clothed in the flowing robe of the Saviour's righteousness, radiant with the beauties of holiness, sitting on the same throne with the Mediator, mingling sweet fellowship with Abraham, and Moses, and the prophets ; conversing familiarly with the Seraphim and the Cherubim, and you yourselves consigned for ever to the gloomy abodes of despair !

Compassionate Saviour ! thou hast said, *suffer the little children to come unto me ;* in the arms of our affections and faith, we now present this assembly of young immortals, with united and ardent supplications, that thou wouldst accept of this our offering. Let not one of these lambs be permitted to perish without thy fold ; but may they all be redeemed, and sanctified, and saved, as monuments of thy rich, abounding, all-conquering grace ; and to thee, thou divinely loving and lovely Jesus, with the Eternal Father, and the Holy Ghost, the Author of our salvation, will be ascribed the undivided glory, now, and everlastingly.....AMEN.

Since the foregoing Sermon was committed to the press, I have been favored with a treatise on the same subject, by the late Dr. RUSH, of Philadelphia, who was long a distinguished ornament of our country, not only as a physician, but as a philanthropist and moralist.—A few extracts from his admirable DEFENCE OF THE BIBLE AS A SCHOOL BOOK, cannot be uninteresting to the reader.

“The MEMORY is the first faculty which opens in the minds of children. Of how much consequence, then, must it be, to impress it with the great truths of Christianity, before it is pre-occupied with less interesting subjects! As all the liquors, which are poured into a cup, generally taste of that which first filled it, so all the knowledge, which is added to that which is treasured up in the memory from the Bible, generally receives an agreeable and useful tincture from it.

“There is a wonderful property in the *memory*, which enables it in old age, to *recover* the knowledge it had acquired in early life, after it had been apparently forgotten for forty or fifty years. Of how much consequence, then, must it be, to fill the mind with that species of knowledge, in childhood and youth, which, when *recalled* in the decline of life, will support the soul under the infirmities of age, and smooth the avenues of approaching death? The Bible is the only book which is capable of affording this support to old age; and it is for this reason that we find it resorted to with so much diligence and pleasure by such old people as have read it in early life. I can recollect many instances of this kind in persons who discovered no attachment to the Bible, in the meridian of their lives, who have, notwithstanding, spent the evening of them in reading no other book. The late Sir John Pringle, physician to the queen of Great Britain, after passing a long life in camps and at court, closed it by studying the Scriptures. So anxious was he to increase his knowledge in them, that he wrote to Dr. Michaelis, a learned professor of divinity in Germany, for an explanation of a difficult text of Scripture, a short time before his death.

"It appears, from the history of the Jews, that they flourished as a nation, in proportion as they honored and read the books of Moses, which contained the only revelation that God had made to the world.....But the benefits of an early and general acquaintance with the Bible, were not confined only to the Jewish nation; they have appeared in many countries in Europe, since the reformation. The industry, and habits of order, which distinguish many of the German nations, are derived from their early instruction in the principles of Christianity, by means of the Bible.—The Bible is still used as a school book in Scotland, and in the New-England states. However opposed the inhabitants of these two distant countries have lately been in political sentiments and conduct, they agree in being the most enlightened in religion and science—the most strict in morals—and the most intelligent in human affairs, of any people whose history has come to my knowledge, upon the surface of the globe. If we descend from nations to sects, we shall find them wise and prosperous in proportion as they become early acquainted with the Scriptures: The Bible is still used as a school book among the quakers. The morality of this sect of Christians is universally acknowledged. Nor is this all,—their prudence in the management of their private affairs, is as much a mark of their society as their sober manners.

"I wish to be excused for repeating here, that, if the Bible did not convey a single direction for the attainment of future happiness, it should be read in our schools in preference to all other books, from its containing the greatest portion of that kind of knowledge which is calculated to produce private and public temporal happiness.

"It is with great pleasure, that I have observed the Bible to be the only book read in the Sunday schools in England.....We hear much of the persons educated in free schools in England, turning out well in the various walks of life. I have inquired into the cause of it, and have satisfied myself, that it is wholly to be ascribed to the general use of the Bible in those schools,

for it seems the children of poor people are of too little consequence to be guarded from the supposed evils of reading the Scriptures in early life, or in an unconsecrated school house.

"However great the benefits of reading the Scriptures in schools have been, I cannot help remarking, that these benefits might be much greater, did schoolmasters take more pains to explain them to their scholars. Did they demonstrate the divine original of the Bible from the purity, consistency, and benevolence of its doctrines and precepts—did they explain the meaning of the Levitical institutions, and show their application to the numerous, and successive gospel dispensations—did they inform their pupils that the gross and abominable vices of the Jews were recorded *only* as proofs of the depravity of human nature, and of the insufficiency of the law, to produce moral virtue, and thereby to establish the necessity and perfection of the gospel system—and above all, did they often enforce the discourses of our Saviour, as the best rule of life, and the surest guide to happiness, how great would be the influence of our schools upon the order and prosperity of our country !.....I think I am not too sanguine in believing, that education, conducted in this manner, would, in the course of two generations, eradicate infidelity from among us, and render civil government scarcely necessary in our country.

"In contemplating the political institutions of the United States, I lament that we waste so much time and money in punishing crimes, and take so little pains to prevent them. We profess to be republicans, and yet we neglect the only means of establishing and perpetuating our republican forms of government, that is, the universal education of our youth in the principles of Christianity, by means of the Bible ; for this divine book, above all others, favors that equality among mankind, that respect for just laws, and all those sober and frugal virtues, which constitute the soul of republicanism."

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