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ADDRESS ON A SCRIPTURAL EDUCATION.

The following report is submitted by the Special Committee, appointed at last meeting of Synod, to prepare a circular "on the subject of a Scriptural Education."

MAN enters the world a frail and helpless creature: and is for a long time even unconscious of his imbecility. But, frail and helpless as he is, man is endowed with a rational and immortal soul, which shall exist throughout eternity, in the condition of unspeakable blessedness, or unutterable woe! And that too, just as the end of his being has, or has not, been attained. The chief end for which man was made, is the glory of God. "This people have I formed for myself: they shall show forth my praise." The rational and moral nature of man fits him for receiving education; and the end for which he was made imperatively demands that he should obtain it: his helplessness and prolonged infantile dependence is evidently designed by the beneficent Creator, for the purpose of cultivating his powers of mind, and for training him for the highly important sphere of action to which he is appropriated. A sense of dependence is necessary for submitting to the nurture and discipline by which the rudiments of knowledge and moral culture are attained. This introductory state gives the mind that submissiveness and docility which are required for the acquisition of knowledge and moral improvement. In early life there is a susceptibility of mind which admirably adapts it as well for the reception of instruction, as for those exercises that would be almost intolerable at a riper age. Impressions made upon the mind at this period are much more enduring than those made later in life. Advantage should be taken of this susceptibility by a careful culture of the youthful mind, and storing it with lessons of spiritual wisdom. It is the Spirit of God who says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." The duty of parents, and of the church is thus pointed out in respect to those placed under their pa-

rental and pastoral care. It is a law of nature repromulged and sanctioned by supernatural revelation, that parents should train their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." And the church of Christ is under obligation to her glorious Head to exercise a pastoral care over the children of the church, by taking a direct charge of their education, as well, as by taking care that parents do their duty, in this respect. "Feed my lambs," is as obligatory, as that other command addressed to Peter by his risen Lord, "Feed my sheep:" and demands the most serious practical consideration, on the part of the christian ministry. The parent may not shift his part of the obligation upon the church, unless incapacitated by inability; nor may the church dispense with her part of the obligation; for to her spiritual officers is the command given, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock," (and the children of believers are part of the flock) "over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood."

It must not be forgotten for a single moment, that it is not every kind of education that meets the necessity of children, or fulfils the revealed design of God in regard to them. They may be taught much that is useful, and even ornamental; nay, the mind may be cultivated to a very high degree, while the most important part of their education, may be either very much, or altogether neglected: for, merely to cultivate the mind, and enlarge its stock of secular knowledge, falls far short of the education which children require. Such is proper in its own place, and only in its own place; for it should not be allowed to supersede a higher and nobler education,—one, fully adapted to the wants and requirements of man. Nor, are we by this to be understood as speaking disparagingly of mental cultivation, or the acquisition of human knowledge in its various departments. Intellectual improvement, we consider of very high importance, and worthy of much greater attention than it has generally received in society; but, we wish it to be distinctly understood that this alone is not the education that man requires.—That it is only subordinate, and comparatively very inferior, to that which we have in view. We take for granted, that intellectual improvement should not be neglected, but made a subject of far more engrossing attention than it has hitherto generally obtained. But, with this admitted importance of intellectual culture, we must take care that it is not allowed to supersede that which is vitally important to the welfare of man.

Our views on this subject we present by remarking

1. That in the education of man, he should be considered in a moral and religious, as well as in an intellectual point of view.

It is well to cultivate the mind; and if proper seed is sown, the more highly cultivated the better. But, if the understanding and reasoning powers of man only, are attended to, the rankest and most noxious weeds will thereby be cherished; while, in a moral point of view the mind will become a tangled wilderness in which a worthless, if not dangerous growth, must predominate. Such culture it is conceded may give vigor and activity to the mind, but, can

do little to direct its energies in the proper channel : it may, indeed, rub off some of the grosser asperities of the outward man,—it may give a partial refinement of manners, but it cannot improve the character. No system of education can be considered proper for man, that does not provide for the training, and improvement of all the capacities of his mind,—that does not regard him as a moral and religious being, as well as endowed with understanding.—Or, that does not keep in view the glory of God, as his chief end. A process of training that regarded him only, or even mainly, as an intellectual being, could not aid him in seeking the glory of God ; nor, in the least prepare him for his enjoyment.

Such an education would not be satisfactory to a civilized heathen : the light of nature admonishes him that he is destined for higher purposes, than the exercise of mere intellectuality. There is an inward longing in the soul of man, the remains of that law implanted by the finger of Almighty God in his original constitution, that reminds him of the need of another, and a more important part of education than that furnished by the culture merely of his intellectual powers. However far short heathenism may have come in teaching man the knowledge of God, or the relation which he holds to him; yet it demonstrates the fact, that the light of nature proclaims the need of a moral and religious education.

2. Education should be thoroughly christian. That system is radically and ruinously defective, that loses sight of the condition of man as a sinner, and deliverance from this condition through the obedience of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. These considerations should give the controlling direction to his education. The most important knowledge for man to learn is divine truth : this alone can make him wise unto salvation,—this, while it shows him that he is by nature without God and without hope in the world, because he is a sinner, and thereby proclaims the need of a Saviour, discovers also the way by which he may be saved ; and that every other way is a refuge of lies. It is of this knowledge that the Spirit of God says, "get wisdom, get understanding. Wisdom is the principal thing ; therefore get wisdom ; and with all thy getting get understanding." For, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom ; and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. Buy the truth and sell it not ; also wisdom, and instruction and understanding."

The excellence and glory of Divine truth do not consist simply in the transcendent grandeur of its doctrines, though in this respect it infinitely surpasses all secular knowledge : but in this, that it is Divine truth believed that becomes the means both of a sinner's justification and sanctification.—That furnishes him with the necessary rule of life.—And supplies him with the only safe motives and principles of moral conduct. Such being the appointed instrumentality of gospel truth, it is essentially necessary to both the present and future well-being of man, that his mind should be thoroughly imbued with its beneficent influence. That his understanding, his conscience, his will, and his affections should all be under the directing power of christian knowledge and principles.

There is a transforming power in Divine truth by which it assimilates to itself the character of those who receive it in sincerity and love. "Seeing," says the Apostle, "ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit." It not only enlightens the understanding, but it purifies the whole soul; for it is the only authorized, and therefore the only effective instrumentality, in the sanctification of man. "Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures. Born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed: and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The promises of salvation contained in the gospel is that which the sinner receives, when he exercises saving faith: and by means of which he is justified. Thus he receives the righteousness of Christ,—that righteousness which is "unto all, and upon all them that believe." It is a fact declared in scripture respecting unbelievers, that "the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." From this it follows, that apart from the knowledge of gospel truth there can be no faith in Christ, and without faith there can be no salvation. "For without faith it is impossible to please God." Salvation, whether considered as the title to everlasting life, or as the fitness for its enjoyment, is obtained through the medium of gospel truth believed.

We remark further, that it is the knowledge of Divine truth that fits man for the business of the present life,—that directs him in the duties arising out of his different relations and employments. The pervading power of this also, ensures personal peace, domestic enjoyment, and social prosperity. We conclude then, that no man can be fitted for the sphere of action to which he is appropriated, apart from the knowledge and influence of Divine truth. That it is by this he is taught to serve God and enjoy him forever.

From this summary view of the use and advantage of gospel truth, the indispensable necessity of christian education is most evident, both as it regards the present and future well-being of the individual, and the prosperity of social life in all its departments.—For, the gospel, is the *most efficient* means for improving society, as well as the *only means* of saving sinners. An education therefore that regards man only, or chiefly as a creature of understanding, and apart from the high moral purposes of his being, is both defective and dangerous.

The otherwise most accomplished education, if christian principles are lost sight of, must necessarily prove a moral failure. The truth of this is verified by an experience, that establishes at the same time, the infinite superiority of christian education—the universal experience of all civilized heathen nations, ancient and modern. Among such, science and philosophy have failed to give currency even to an outward morality; so, that amid much refinement, and enlarged acquaintance with human knowledge the most licentious morals prevailed. This result is as clearly established by inductive experience, as any principle or fact in science. And, it is established by a still higher authority than experience. For, it is

the Spirit of God who says, of all heathens;—"They became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened: professing themselves to be wise they became fools."

The progressive advancement of human knowledge has done little for modern heathens; as may be seen even in the most favorable examples, such as the Hindus, and the Chinese. We adduce a particular instance in illustration of this remark. And, we give it as stated (in 1825) by Mr. Duff in the General Assembly of the church of Scotland. And the statement is of the greatest value on this subject. As Mr. Duff is the Assembly's chief missionary at Calcutta, and one of the most gifted and enlightened of living men, he had both the opportunity and the capacity of forming a correct judgment. "I have already shown," said he, "that the communication of useful knowledge will demolish the ancient learning and religion of Hindustan." On this subject a grand experiment has been made at the expense of the British Government in the metropolis of India. About eighteen years ago, there was founded in Calcutta a college for educating Hindu youths, in the literature and science of Europe, *apart from religion.* The seminary has been attended chiefly by persons of rank, wealth and influence in society. Here then was a favorable opportunity of ascertaining the power of European knowledge, when brought into contact with the systems of Hinduism. The result was precisely such as any one acquainted with the subject would confidently anticipate. For the last ten years, class after class has issued forth from this institution, who by the course of enlightened study pursued, were made alive to the gross absurdities of their own systems. These, therefore, they boldly denounced as masses of imposture and debasing error, and the Brahmans as deceivers of the people, though many of themselves belonged to that exalted class. But no morals or religion having been taught in the institution, the young men were in a state of mind utterly blank as regards morals and religious truth; moral and religious obligation. They were infidels or sceptics of the most perfect kind, believing in nothing, believing not even in the existence of a Deity, and glorying in their unbelief." This experiment illustrates what may be expected from a system of education that does not include religious instruction. The result will be similar in all similar circumstances: modified it may be, by special peculiarities in different cases, but issuing after all, in the same general result,—that of infidelity. In a neighbourhood where christian knowledge is more generally diffused than it is in Calcutta, it must have an influence upon the general education of youth, though it may be conducted on principles apart from religion. In such a country as our own, therefore, the evil effects of excluding religion from general education, may not appear so evident for some time, but ultimately it will result in the prevalence of a widely extended scepticism, which, when it has taken place will not be easily arrested in its course. The lurid clouds that darken the moral horizon, seem already to indicate that such a state of things, is rapidly approaching. In the meantime the result is retarded only by the general influence of religious truth in society. But, let this influence be removed, or very much lessened, as it must

be by the exclusion of christian principles from a common school education, and the fearful crisis of a general scepticism will soon overtake us.

The danger of separating education from christian truth is further illustrated by the example of Popery—a system which while it retains the name of christian has abandoned the simple truths of christianity. It was the absence, of christian education and principle, that constituted what is emphatically called the dark ages. But during those ages, Popery was in its zenith of power. And the same thing is still true to a certain extent in countries where Popery predominates. The reason is, because, “the mystery of iniquity” does not allow free access to the scriptures of truth; the Bible is to the votaries of Popery generally a sealed book: and the results are ignorance and vice. That it is traceable to this cause alone, is evident, by comparing Popish, with Protestant countries where a much greater acquaintance with the bible is maintained. To illustrate our meaning we give Ireland as an example. Popery, though possessing the fruitful soil of the South and West, presents a condition of moral and physical wretchedness not far above barbarism: while Protestant Ulster, with an inferior soil, has attained a high degree of moral superiority, and physical comfort. Under the same government, and political regimen, with the advantage of a far superior soil, the condition of the Popish part of Ireland speaks volumes on the subject of education. No axiom in Geometry is more evident than that the extraordinary disparity between the North and South of Ireland is caused by the difference of education: in the latter, utter ignorance characterizes the population, in the former it is distinguished by intelligence and extensive knowledge of christian truth.

Lest it should be assumed that the moral and religious inferiority to which we have referred in the examples of heathen and Popish countries, is traceable to the absence of education, and not, because of the absence of a christian education, it is proper to state that such assumption is unsupported by facts. It is true that in heathen, and popish countries education has not been generally enjoyed by the mass of the people: but it is equally true, that, apart from christian principles, education has always failed to elevate the human character to high moral excellence; no matter how highly cultivated, the mind may be, by mere secular instruction. The most enlightened of the heathens are no exception to this statement: their mental culture did not preserve them from the grossest licentiousness, and the most abhorrent practices, as all who are acquainted with the writings of the ancients well know.

The same fact is verified by the example of the Popish countries where secular education has made any great progress. The revival of literature in Italy was accompanied by an almost universal scepticism, and profligacy of manners. “The revival of letters, of science, and of the arts was not the moving principle of the reformation,”—says its most distinguished historian. “We may rather say, that the Paganism of the poets when it re-appeared in Italy, brought with it the Paganism of the heart. Vain superstitions were attack-

ed :—but it was incredulity that established itself in their stead with a smile of disdain and mockery. Ridicule of all things, even the most sacred, was the fashion, and deemed the mark of wit ; religion was regarded only as an instrument of government." "I have one fear," exclaimed Erasmus in 1516, "it is, that with the study of ancient literature the ancient Paganism should re-appear."

France during the 18th century, possessed much science and literature : but her learned men were sceptics, because their education was destitute of the renovating principle of christian truth. France became a nation of infidels, or atheists ; and in her revolutionary era, rioted in the abyss of profligacy and crime, not because she was without education, but because her learned and influential men were destitute of christian education ! Their intellectual greatness, separated from christian principles as it was, made them great in wickedness,—disrobed them of the last filament of humanity, and sunk them to the level of demons !

Great intelligence, apart from high moral, and religious principles, must prove ruinous to both individual, and social well-being, as we have seen exemplified in the case of France. Like a gallant-ship, set adrift without a pilot, is only the more endangered by unfurling her sails ; so a greater degree of intelligence, apart from the directing influence of christian truth, may only the more readily expose the possessor to moral ruin.

It is much to be lamented that the sceptical tendency of the present age, even when the importance of christian truth is admitted, would add it merely as a condiment to an already finished education, rather than make it, what it ought to be, the basis of all mental culture. For not unfrequently, though it is admitted that christian truth may be taught with advantage, the notion prevails that it should form no part of popular education. That the bible, and the catechism, nay, the very elements of religious truth should be excluded from schools ! To teach in our common schools the elemental principles of christianity, is held to be sectarian, and therefore to be avoided. Improving on this view of the subject, others would go so far as to tie up the hands of even parents and ministers of the gospel from imparting religious instruction to children. In the judgment of such, children may be educated in any other department of learning, the whole circle of which may be laid open before them ; but christian truth is carefully to be excluded, and the doors of its august temple shut against them. And all this is done too, under the pretence of doing honor to truth ; lest, instead of deliberate conviction, children should merely be biased in its favor by the fact of pre-occupancy. According to such, the minds of children should be kept free of all religious instruction, that they may determine for themselves with matured judgment without the bias of early education.

Such crude notions are as much at variance with scripture and common sense, as they are perilous to the safety of the rising generation,—perilous, alike to the individual, and to society ! The unavoidable result of these views, though it may not be contemplated by some who hold them, while by others it may be anticipated, must be

the predominance of immorality and error! If the elements of christian truth are not taught to children, their minds must soon become pre-occupied with false views of morals and religion. If the seed of truth is not early sown, the foul weeds of error will spring up in the mind with luxuriant growth. Man is a religious creature, and this principle of his nature is not the less active though left to waste itself on improper objects: for, if in early life he is not taught the lessons of heavenly wisdom as they are unfolded in the volume of revelation, he must become a ready prey to either superstition or scepticism, or perhaps to a combination of both!

It is impracticable, and wrong if it were not, to attempt to keep the minds of children in a state of religious vacuity; there must be religious principles of some kind; for atheism cannot long have an abiding place in the human heart. If not possessed by true, it must soon be pre-occupied by false views of religion. Such being the case, shall not christian parents and ministers turn to advantage the authority and influence which God has given them over the subjects of their parental and pastoral care—so as to fill their minds with truth, and train them up in the knowledge and service of the true God; or, shall they abandon the tender subjects of their care to be carried about with every wind of doctrine—to be the dupes of religious falsehood; and so finally become the prey of Satan, the destroyer of souls? There is here no neutral position—no midway course which we can adopt. If the education of children is not conducted on christian principles, the most fatal results may certainly be anticipated. They must from early life be educated in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, or otherwise they are left an easy prey to the devourer! The *Christian* can have no difficulty in making his choice between these alternatives.

Thoughtless and imprudent men, who have not forecast of mind to anticipate the danger, may indeed follow the deceitful, though popular current, without designing to dishonor God, or to peril their children's welfare: nevertheless, it is infidel, and originates in hostility to christian truth—springs from hatred to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and salvation through faith in his blood. Scepticism, and Popery and other enemies of pure Christianity, anticipate respectively the prevalence of their own systems by such a course of education. They hope, in the negation of christian truth, to implant their own superstitious and soul-destroying errors in the minds of youth! The immediate effect of such a course is the diffusion in society of a sceptical latitudinarianism; but as the minds of men cannot generally long endure the negation of all religious emotion, these disciples of infidel training will insensibly glide into the idolatry and superstition of Rome, because far more agreeable to the carnal mind than pure Christianity. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned."

3. Scriptural education, is as practicable as any other kind of education.

The difficulty of imparting religious instruction has often been made an objection to it. The validity of the objection we presume

may well be questioned. The child that is capable of receiving mere secular instruction, is as capable at the same time, we maintain, of receiving religious instruction. The first principles of christian morals, and many of the truths of our holy religion, are as much within the sphere of a child's capacity, as the simplest elements of a secular education. To master the Alphabet of a language, we are persuaded, requires a far greater exercise of mind, and far more painful drudgery to a child, than to be taught a distinct understanding of the Decalogue, which in fact contains a summary of all moral obligation. And there are difficulties in the construction of language which a child must grapple with in its primary lessons, which certainly demand not less maturity of thought for their solution, than many of the most important truths of christianity. One great characteristic of christian truth is the perfect simplicity by which it is adapted to the capacity of the humblest minds. There are mysteries, it is true, in our holy religion, but these form no obstacle to the christian education of children, because the *comprehension* of these form no part of christian instruction: these are as much beyond the reach of the adult as the child. In such cases however, let it be borne in mind that it is not mysteries that are to be solved, but facts that are to be learned, and that a clear apprehension of the facts may be as much within the reach of children as of the most powerful minded.

For example, the existence of God is a fundamental truth, without the knowledge of which there can be no religion. But what is it that must be known? Is it the mode of the Divine subsistence?—No! for this cannot be understood by any created intellect; this is not more baffling to the comprehension of a child, than it is to the most gigantic created mind. The fact that there is a God, possessed of such perfections as the scriptures predicate of him, and not the mode of his existence, is what we are called to believe. Than this, nothing can be more plain, or more easily understood—it is a simple fact, that lies as much within the range of the humblest scholar, as the profoundest philosopher. And this is true also of the doctrines of the Trinity, and the incarnation of the Son of God. The scriptures state the facts, that there is *one*, and *only one* God,—that he subsists in the persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And that in the fulness of time the Son of God became man; “God manifested in the flesh.” These, as well as others that might be adduced, are to be received as bible truths, not because he who receives them is capable of measuring the unfathomable depths of the Divine nature and subsistence; but because they are revealed facts. They must be received, if received at all, simply on the testimony of God himself: and they are of as easy comprehension as any other fact, be it what it may! The whole difficulty here is fictitious, and is caused by an attempt to comprehend what no creature can comprehend, and then making this inability a reason for rejecting the facts revealed, as is done by Socinians; or by the modified view adopted by those who make the mysteries of religion a reason why children should not be taught religion.

There is then, no real difficulty in making christian truth an essential and large part of early education : the ground of objection militates, if legitimately carried out, against all the mysteries of religion ; followed out it necessarily leads to rationalism, or the disbelief of every thing that mere reason cannot grasp : We feel ourselves called upon to maintain, as we do, not only that the necessities of children demand, but also that they are capable of receiving instruction in Divine truth ! In conclusion, we add, without fear of successful contradiction, that the view which we have given is verified by the experience of a very large portion of the most enlightened christians. We venture the opinion, that the greater number of such owe their superior intelligence to the fact of their having been early indoctrinated into the principles of christianity.

4. It is the duty of the church, and of parents in particular, to supply the children and youth under their charge with scriptural instruction.

The conclusion to which we have now arrived, is that christian truth ought to be taught as the basis of popular education. In the preceding report we have shown that in the education of man, he should be considered in a religious as well as an intellectual point of view. That his education should be thoroughly christian,—and that such education may be as easily imparted to children as any other kind of education. And now we have remarked, that it is the duty of the church and of parents in particular to supply such instruction.

With the earliest dawns of reason—as soon as children are capable of receiving an idea on any subject, so soon should the elements of christian morality and truth be imparted to them : and the increasing current of religious instruction should keep pace with the developement of intellectual capacity, so that their opening faculties may become thoroughly imbued with christian knowledge and principles. The result of such education, is a becoming sense of the reverence due to God as revealed in the scriptures—a conviction of the sinfulness and helplessness of man by nature—his need of a Saviour to save him from sin, and that such a Saviour as he needs is provided and revealed, by the grace of God, in the person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And all this too accompanied with a sense of the submission due to God and the obedience which he requires of man.

We do not say that all this will be savingly known by children ; but that does not affect the correctness of the view which we have given : for the most enlarged Christian education is not always accompanied with saving knowledge in the case of adults. But, as the truth of scripture is the only means of making a sinner savingly acquainted with the one, living, and true God, by faith in Christ, and through the agency of the Holy Spirit : then may we expect only in the use of these means, to know him, whom to know is life everlasting. And as the truth of God is the only means of a sinner's sanctification, then may we expect only by the knowledge of truth to be sanctified ; hence, the more that the minds of children are pervaded with Christian knowledge, they are the more in the way of knowing the true God, and the way of salvation by his grace ; and the more too

will they be in the way of sanctification, and thereby be the more fitted for glorifying and enjoying God. This view of the subject imposes a vast responsibility upon parents. The apprehension that his children may prove ungodly, must be a source of much anxiety to a pious parent. The heaven appointed means of averting this, is to teach them the lessons of divine truth, and thus train them up in the fear of the Lord, and when they become old, God has promised that they "will not depart from it!" The Christian ministry also, to whom is committed the oversight of the flock of Christ, should give this subject the most earnest consideration. Holding as we do, that the church representative is under the most solemn obligation to see that children under their pastoral care be educated in the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom, we hold further, that this should be done not only by the pastoral supervision of parents; but also by a direct agency of the church.

Pastoral examinations of the youth of a congregation, will in part cover this ground; but only in part: the subject is too extensive to be safely left to such occasional instructions; and moreover, we are persuaded that pastoral catechizing will not be greatly profitable, unless there is a preceding, and broader basis of instruction laid down by an every-day Christian education. In a word, we mean that we should organize primary schools, which should be so managed, that not only the intellectual powers of children might be cultivated to the greatest advantage, but that their morals and Christian character also should be formed by careful religious instruction; and this conducted under the immediate direction and control of the church.

1. We recommend that in every congregation where it is practicable in the existing state of things, a school should form part of the parochial machinery of instruction. And that such school, with its teacher, shall be placed under the immediate supervision of session; while superior church judicatories shall have, as in all other ecclesiastical matters, a superintending care of all the schools within their jurisdiction—an authority both original and appellate.

2. That in these parochial schools, the Bible shall be regularly and daily read—portions of the Psalms, in our metrical version, and of the Shorter and Larger Catechisms (by the Westminster Divines) committed to memory—and that the more evident and elemental doctrines of Christianity shall be made subjects of scripture proof. To this may be added such other Bible exercises as may be embraced in a well digested plan prepared by Synod, for the general use of the church.

3. That such scriptural instruction shall be given *collaterally* with the secular branches of education, including the younger scholars, to the capacity of whom the moral and religious exercises shall be adapted.

4. That said schools shall be opened and closed with prayer, and reading the scriptures.

5. In congregations numerically weak, or so situated that a parish school cannot be organized, or kept up, the moral and religious part of the instruction shall be provided for by the pastor of the congregation, devoting one secular day, or part of such day each week;

and if necessary, calling upon the aid of the members of session, or other suitable persons of the congregation, whom the session might deem fit to be employed in this service. The assistance of the elders would necessarily be demanded in all congregations including extended geographical bounds; and in some cases without the presence of the pastor.

6. That whensoever members of the church have an opportunity of teaching, or of influencing teachers of common schools, they endeavor to have this plan carried into operation in whole or in part.

7. That where our youth are seeking a liberal education, they be recommended to make, as far as practicable, the original scriptures, and a purified classical literature, the text books of their studies.

8. That sessions be recommended to establish congregational libraries where practicable, for the benefit of all, but especially of the young.

Popular education, embracing moral and religious instruction, is essentially a scriptural principle: the Protestant Reformers clearly perceived this, and guided by its direction, endeavored to establish schools for the instruction of the young. In all the Protestant countries of Europe, with the exception of England, they were more or less successful in their efforts to establish systems of popular education. But by none was a popular and religious system of education carried into effect so thoroughly, and so efficiently, as by our Covenanted ancestors in Scotland. To their profound sagacity and piety, in devising a very efficient system of popular education, we are indebted for the advantages, moral and religious, which we enjoy.

They have left us an inheritance which has been enriching spiritually every generation through which it has passed; and which is destined, by the blessing of God, we hope, to enrich generations yet unborn—and to become the means of diffusing widely the testimony of Jesus throughout the world. We know no way by which we can better show ourselves worthy of our birth-right as Covenanters, or better perform our duty to the rising generation, than by doing all we can in behalf of not only a popular, but a scriptural education—than to adopt such a course as that proposed in the preceding report, by which the minds of children may from very early life, be submitted to the enlightening and sanctifying influences of the gospel; thus leading them directly to the fresh, flowing fountains of divine truth in the sacred scriptures, that they may thereby be made wise unto salvation!

Unless some vigorous effort of the kind proposed, be made, we have reason, from the present aspect of society, to apprehend danger. To fear that the fond anticipations of parents, and the hopes of the church, will be sadly disappointed. Unless something is done to arrest the obviously growing influence of the *spurious liberality* of the age, the evident tendency of which is sceptical, children, as they grow up and pass from the paternal roof, will mingle with the world to the eminent danger of their abandoning their church connection, and perhaps of making shipwreck of the faith! A scriptural education is the best safeguard of youth, and lays the best foundation for piety in the church.

We cannot withhold the remark, though it does not strictly belong to the subject, submitted to the consideration of your committee—that while we are far indeed from under-rating the value of systematic theology, yet we have no hesitation in recommending that preference should be given to the word of God, as the text-book of theology. We doubt not, that very great benefit would soon accrue to the church, and immediate advantage to her ministry, if some portion of scripture were made the basis of the theological prelections, rather than any human system of divinity, however excellent.

In conclusion, we remark, that at no former period perhaps, has society had so much cause of apprehension from the combined influence of scepticism and antichristianism, on the carnal mind, as at the present time. The prince of darkness is now mustering his hosts for some dread conflict; and ungodly men, as of one mind in their opposition to truth, crowd to his standard. This is strongly manifested by the world's rancorous hatred to the application of Christian principles to popular education. On this account, the friends of truth should the more earnestly unite their efforts in behalf of a scriptural system of education, as the *most efficient means* of arresting the progress of popery and infidelity; and of training up children in the fear of the Lord.

All which is respectfully submitted.

DAVID SCOTT, Chairman.

THE INVALIDITY OF POPISH ORDINANCES.

Synod, at its late meeting, decided that the ordinances of the church of Rome are not to be held valid. Had Synod sufficient reasons for this decision? This question we answer in the affirmative on the following grounds.

The church of Rome is not the church of Christ—she is the mother of harlots. This is admitted by all sound commentators. Papists worship departed saints, angels, even the *pretended* wood of the cross and other inanimate objects, under the name *relics*. They call the mother of our Lord, *Refugium peccatorum*—the Refuge of sinners, and thus “worship and serve the creature more than the Creator.” These things are too notorious to need proof. Holiness is not required by the church of Rome as a qualification for membership.—The history of the nations of Europe, during the dark ages, shew that princes and people lived in the practice of all manner of wickedness. One prince caused his subjects to murder those of another—for what were their wars, but wholesale murders—and yet princes and people, on both sides, were good children of the church! so long as they were liberal and obsequious to the clergy. This was frequently by the instigation of the *holy father*, the Pope!

Papists reply, that they are required to confess their sins and do penance. True; but to whom do they confess? Besides, for a small sum they can get an absolution, a pardon, or an indulgence,