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ART. I.—*Survey of modern German Works on Interpretation.*

FOR reasons which have been too often stated in this miscellany to need a repetition now, we think it important that the American student should have some acquaintance with the German works which relate to the study of the Scriptures. We do not, indeed, wish to see a criticism which puts all the foundations out of course introduced into our church; we dare not rejoice in the scepticism which already creeps into some minds with regard to the canonical integrity, the authenticity, and the inspiration of the Bible. But we are persuaded, that if the church consents to close her eyes upon the increasing facilities for biblical investigation which are possessed in Germany, and to turn away from the controversies which are there waged, she will find herself in a field of battle without armour, or, if armed, with the mail and greaves and heavy weapons of a former age, wholly unsuited to the emergency, and the new modes of attack.

With these impressions, we are about to lay before our readers a succinct review of recent German publications, in the biblical department. As our object is to give information, we shall borrow from every source which is accessible to us. The works

teaching and so much guidance, which can only come from the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, then it is we look around for those who are deeply and sincerely pious; who live near to God and the cross, as the hope and stay, under Jesus Christ, of the Church.

ART. VIII.—*Gall's Lesson System of Education.*

THERE is no longer any occasion to demonstrate the utility of Sabbath Schools, by a formal array of arguments. No enlightened Christian can be supposed to be unfriendly or indifferent to their prosperity. Indeed, when we consider that the institution is founded on a spirit of benevolence as pure as the philanthropy of the Gospel, and as expansive as the whole human family, we cease to wonder that the only obstacles to the universal acknowledgment of its claims, are found in deplorable ignorance, inveterate prejudice, or inexorable bigotry. Nor are we surprised to learn, that even amid the twilight of the sixteenth century, Borromeo, the good Archbishop of Milan, to whom belongs the honoured title of "*founder of Sabbath schools,*" succeeded in establishing them in every part of an immense diocese; and that within four years from the introduction of the system into England, by Robert Raikes, (who seems, however, to have devised the plan without any information as to its previous existence in Italy,) 250,000 children were participating in its inestimable privileges. Whenever the subject has been clearly presented, it has carried along with it the conviction of its incalculable importance, to the prosperity and enlargement of the Church. And the time has now arrived, when the intrinsic value of the system is not to be estimated solely nor chiefly by its apparent adaptation to the wants of society: its claims to patronage rest not on the precarious ground of prospective good, but on the firm basis of past success; on the rich harvest of blessings which it has already gathered into the "garner of the Lord." The institution is justly regarded as an indispensable part of that grand moral machinery, which has been set in operation for the conversion of the world; and we need no voice from heaven to assure us, that it will be found a most efficient auxiliary in hastening on this glorious result. The spirit which it breathes is a spirit of "peace, and good will to men." With a disinterested beneficence which asks no return, it blesses both the dispenser and the recipient of its favours: its charities are universal, for it aims to enrich the whole race of man; and its fruits are eternal, for it seeks only to implant

the seed, and nurture the tender scion on earth, which is to flourish and bloom for ever in the paradise above.

But while we dwell with peculiar pleasure on the inestimable good which this institution has accomplished, and rejoice in the belief that it has rescued thousands of children from ruin, and diffused a hallowed influence over society, and trained up many immortal souls for heaven, we are constrained to think that it is still in the infancy of its strength, and that its powers have been very imperfectly developed. We would not be ungrateful for what it has done, but we are persuaded that it might have done much more. We see that all those influences which are relied upon for rectifying the disorders of human nature, for enlightening the ignorant, alarming the careless, reproofing the vicious, and bringing lost sinners back to Christ, are concentrated in a Sabbath school, under the most favourable circumstances for securing their end, and yet, that the actual results, however great in themselves, fall far short of what appear to be just expectations in regard to them. The conviction, therefore, is forced upon us, that there is some serious defect, either in the system of instruction, or in the mode of its administration. We are disposed to think that the system itself is defective, and very materially so. We may, perhaps, have the misfortune to differ on this point from many whose reverence for the existing mode of instruction is a natural consequence of the exclusiveness with which they have contemplated it, and, for their satisfaction, we will briefly state some of the grounds on which our opinion rests.

It will be conceded, that the great end of education, certainly of Sabbath school instruction, is the conversion and sanctification of the heart. This end can only be effected through the instrumentality of the truth applied by the Holy Spirit. It is too obvious to require repetition, that the truth can only affect the conscience by being understood, and that the more distinctly it is perceived by the intellect, the greater is the probability of its impressing the heart. We inquire, then, whether the present system inculcates the truth in the way here pointed out? Does it cause the truth to be understood? These are general questions; and if applied as they are intended to be, to the great body of children in our Sabbath schools, we fear that an affirmative answer cannot be returned to them. The scholars are usually required to commit to memory a certain number of verses in the Bible, or of answers in the Catechism, and they do it; that is, to make the case as favourable as possible, we will suppose that they do it. But the inference by no means follows, that because they can utter with even a parrot-like volubility a form of words, they necessarily comprehend their import. So far from this, every

teacher knows that children recite fluently many lessons of which they are utterly unable to give any account in their own phraseology. Their task is, in many cases, a mere exercise for the memory; and they are trained to cultivate this faculty at the expense of all the others. We are probably within the limits of the truth when we affirm, that of twenty thousand children that might be found, who could repeat with ease the answers in the Shorter Catechism, not three thousand could give any intelligent account of the doctrines of that invaluable compend. Parents and teachers admit and deplore the existence of the evil in question. They feel the obligation of instructing the young in the doctrines and duties of religion, while they are induced, by considering the difficulties in the way, to view the undertaking as nearly or quite impracticable. From this painful dilemma, the mind usually finds relief in the opinion, that if the mere "form of sound words" be securely lodged in the child's memory, he will, in process of time, as his faculties are developed, learn to attach to this form its appropriate ideas. We are ready to admit that there is, both in philosophy and experience, to a certain extent, good ground for this opinion. But, surely, it would be better that this "form of sound words" should be so taught as to be understood, if possible, when it is learnt, instead of waiting for future years and after efforts to render it intelligible. Many people act under the impression that mere Scripture phrases, or verbal formularies, conveying some moral lesson, have a magical efficiency which renders it highly probable, if not absolutely certain, that all the salutary tendencies of their hidden truths will be put forth whenever an occasion shall be offered in after life.

We speak feelingly when we assert, that the exercise in question, *as ordinarily conducted*, is the most irksome and heartless drudgery in the whole routine of a child's religious education. And it is worthy of inquiry how far this authenticated fact has aided, in banishing from so many of our Sabbath schools a book, which, when regarded as an epitome of sound doctrine, and a key to the interpretation of the Scriptures, is more vitally essential to a system of instruction than almost any other. But we surely need not labour to establish a point which is intuitively certain. All men agree, whatever the practice of some may be, that it is not possible for the truth to operate any further than it is understood. The opposite opinion, that a simple form of words is like some chemical agent, invested with a mysterious efficacy, by means of which it is to exert a controlling influence in shaping the course and moulding the character of the man, involves a bundle of absurdities too gross to be endured. We conclude, then, that the present system fails of imparting to children clear

and precise ideas of the truths of religion, and is therein materially defective. We are not to be understood as discouraging the use of the Shorter Catechism, in the religious education of children. We believe it is already very criminally neglected. Nor do we wish to make the impression that it is peculiarly difficult. Our whole object is to show that its excellence and efficacy do not lie in the words, but in the truths which those words so appropriately express; and consequently, that our task is not accomplished when the words are taught, unless the truths are comprehended. It is not against teaching the Catechism, therefore, that our remarks are directed, but against the manner in which this is commonly done. We believe that children of eight or nine years of age are competent, under proper instruction, adequately to comprehend this most excellent summary of Christian doctrine. And it is the more important that this instruction be given early, as it is only in early youth that the great majority of persons have the opportunity of receiving it.

We have already intimated an opinion that by the existing mode of instruction, undue attention is paid to the improvement of the memory, while the higher faculties of the mind are neglected; and we repeat the observation here, in the immediate light of the views just expressed on another branch of the subject. If the discipline of the mind be an object equally desirable with the acquisition of knowledge, that plan of instruction must certainly be injudicious, which sets out with disturbing the natural balance of the faculties, and then perseveringly cultivates one to the serious neglect of the others. That reciprocal adaptation of the several powers to each other, in other words, that intellectual symmetry in which mental vigour so remarkably consists, can only be preserved by a system which aims to enlighten the understanding and correct the judgment, while it exercises the memory. But if the remarks we have made above be correct, the existing system is seriously defective in this respect also. Any person may readily convince himself of the justice of this remark, by passing through one of our Sabbath schools, and listening to the various recitations of the pupils. In many cases they are not expected to understand when they repeat, and in very many more the teachers become so wearied by frequent endeavours to teach them ideas instead of words, that, at length, they give up in despair, and require a bare rehearsal of the appointed lesson. It is obvious, that this plan encourages the children not only to neglect the sense of the passages which are given them as their weekly tasks, but to hurry in the same superficial manner over every thing which they undertake to read. And the oftener a sentence, especially an involved sentence like

many in the Catechism, is repeated in the way here pointed out, the more is its meaning obscured, and less likely is the learner to discover its import. It appears then, that although so much partiality is manifested towards the memory, and so prominent a place assigned to it by this plan of instruction, yet, it ungenerously makes no valuable return. It brings back little besides words; like the vineyard, which, after all the care with which it was pruned, and watered, and dressed, yielded only wild grapes at last. Nor is the system adapted even to a proper cultivation of this faculty. A memory which may have been trained to great skill in retaining a continuous series of words, or of sounds, may be, and commonly will be, very defective in recalling ideas; and it is highly desirable, therefore, that this faculty should be conversant as early as possible with ideas, and never with words, except as the signs of ideas. Nothing could be more unfavourable to the object here contemplated, than the prevailing practice of requiring children to recite in the manner above described, lessons of inordinate length. The number of verses which a child commits from one Sabbath to another, is too commonly regarded as a fair criterion of his intellectual strength. A slight examination would evince the impropriety of measuring a pupil's knowledge by the amount of his reading, and show that in many instances, the number of distinct ideas acquired is inversely as the extent of ground which has been gone over in quest of them. The reason is, that children, encouraged by the method in which their recitations are conducted, take no further notice of the ideas than is necessary to aid them in remembering the language in which they are clothed; and, of course, their perceptions of each truth are confused, in proportion to the whole amount of words with which the memory has burthened itself in accomplishing a single task. If this be the case, it follows that the mind can be properly disciplined and furnished with well-digested knowledge, only by confining the attention at every step of the education to particular ideas until these have been as fully mastered as possible; so that the scholar, like a skilful general at the head of an invading army, will leave, as he passes along, no obstacle unsubdued which might afterwards occasion him doubt or perplexity. If it be thought that such a plan would very much retard a child's education, we reply, that no one who traces the plan to its consequences, can doubt that it would accelerate his progress in a very marked degree; and even if it were not so, we are disposed to acquiesce in the sentiment of the apostle, that "it is better to speak five words with the understanding than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue."

The only remaining objection to the present system which

we shall mention, is a very serious one; but we can barely advert to it for a single moment. Our readers may anticipate us in the observation, that the system makes no adequate provision for enabling children to put in practice the lessons which they learn on the Sabbath. Knowledge which cannot be used is no better than a light under a bushel. If "all Scripture is profitable," it is a matter of solemn obligation to teach those whom we are instructing, in what way each separate truth which they acquire may be made "profitable" to them. Were this practice general, the truths of revelation would be invested in the estimation of every child with a peculiar interest. He would learn to regard them as having a direct bearing on his own daily conduct, to search for the concealed moral as for hid treasure, and to link, by a golden chain of associations, all the leading incidents of his own life, with kindred facts recorded in the inspired volume. We would by no means insinuate that this grand result has not been aimed at in the existing system. We perceive at once, on opening a volume of the "Union Questions," (which are used in most of our Sabbath Schools,) that one prominent design of the writer, was to secure the very end of which we are speaking; and that he has not succeeded more effectually in this purpose, is to be attributed, perhaps, less to himself than to the plan on which the work is drawn up. We take the sincerest pleasure in recording our belief that those little volumes have accomplished an incalculable amount of good, while we insist that they would have accomplished much more, had they been differently constructed. As to the Shorter Catechism, it has been somewhat improved, but we believe that it still retains much of the repulsiveness to children which it indubitably had, when we used to submit, with constrained resignation, to the martyrdom of going every Wednesday afternoon, with a score of little catechumens, to repeat the mysterious answers to our venerable pastor. He explained it, indeed, (or tried to do so) with all the affability and tenderness of a man ripened for heaven; and we have heard other ministers explain it since; but we have scarcely known one to succeed in making its doctrines intelligible to his youthful auditors. If this be a necessary evil, all who are attached to the standards of the Presbyterian Church will deeply regret it; and that it is so, under the present system of education, we have almost ceased to doubt.

We are unable to say whether our readers have gone along with us in the strictures which we have suffered ourselves to make on the existing mode of Sabbath School instruction. Some of them, who have been accustomed to view the subject in a different aspect, will, of course, hesitate before subscribing to our remarks; while others, we presume, will acquiesce in all that

has been said. But, whatever diversity of opinion may exist amongst them, in reference to that matter, we are persuaded that all will be disposed to examine with candour, any suggestions which may be offered with a view to introducing a more enlightened system. We are aware, that, in the business of education, material changes should be adopted with much caution; and yet, on the other hand, we are sure, that no badge of antiquity, nor prescriptive authority, nor popular sanction, should be allowed to perpetuate plans of instruction, which are plainly inadequate, and whose tendencies are, in many respects, pernicious. Impressed with these sentiments, we propose now to delineate the leading features of what has been modestly styled, "*The Lesson System of Education*;" a system, which, we confidently predict, will soon supersede every other in the Sabbath Schools of our country, and of the world.

This system originated a few years ago in Scotland, where it has already acquired much popularity. We have no detailed history of its rise and progress, but a slight examination of it has convinced us, that its author, Mr. JAMES GALL, has applied to this subject the energies of a powerful and discriminating mind, richly furnished with biblical knowledge, and with the ripened fruits of Christian experience. We are not prepared to say that he has accomplished all that can be done in amending our schemes of religious education, but, while anticipating the same progressive improvement in this science, which attends every other department of human effort, we hail, with cordial pleasure, this successful attempt to simplify, by means of a careful study of the juvenile mind, the complicated business of teaching. We regard this system as the harbinger of a new era in the history of education. We are disposed to consider its founder as furnishing, in his own person, a pledge that the wants referred to in the July number of this work, are about to be supplied; that a succession of Christian philosophers will arise, who shall "trace the principles of reason from the most plastic stage of their germination through all their development;" and that men will be raised up "to take advantage of the results of such observation, to suggest the proper modes of applying instruction to the respective cases."

The following paragraph contains what may be considered as Mr. Gall's definition of education:

"Education, in all its branches and forms, is a means employed by civilized man for attaining one single object, and that object is *happiness*; happiness to the individual pupil himself, and happiness to the society of which he forms a part. But, as it is a settled point with men of every sentiment and creed, that happiness is to be found only in the practice of *virtue*, or, more properly speaking, in *holiness*, we narrow our field of investigation, and yet speak precisely the same truth, when we

say, that the end of all education should be the attainment of holiness—the practice of virtue—the right performance of the duties which we owe to God, to ourselves, and to our fellow men.”

This view, it will be perceived, by no means precludes a proper degree of attention to the secular branches of education, but as these concern objects which cannot confer but merely increase the happiness which is inseparable from virtue, “they ought,” as Mr. Gall observes, “most certainly to be secondary, and auxiliary only, to those other branches, which tend, not incidentally, but directly to the establishment and promotion of holiness.” The substance of what has now been expressed, the author afterwards arranges under four distinct heads which comprise the objects to be aimed at in educating the young, to wit: “1st. The cultivation and disciplining of the several powers of the mind. 2d. The acquisition of useful knowledge. 3d. The capacity of communicating knowledge readily to others; and 4th. The habit of applying all this knowledge to useful purposes.” If it be asked whether this scheme can claim originality, we reply, that while the several particulars here enumerated, have been frequently represented as deserving of special attention, we know of no system besides the one under consideration, which assigns a prominent place to the two last named objects, and which aims to promote them by uniform and appropriate efforts. Having already endeavoured to show that the existing plan of instruction is defective in regard to several of the points just mentioned, we shall now proceed to exhibit the remedy which is provided for these evils by the system of Mr. Gall.

It is a radical principle in this system, that children are to recite nothing which they do not understand. The author argues against the prevailing and authorized neglect of this sound maxim, with an ardour of feeling, and a force of reasoning, which do equal honour to him as a philosopher and as a Christian. “He has long considered,” he observes of himself, “this baneful, heartless, and absurd conduct in the treatment of children, as one of the most subtle and destructive delusions of Satan, in retarding the spread of true religion and evangelical truth. And he has often lamented to see Christians—pious, and, in other respects, judicious Christians—not, perhaps, advocating, but still practising and exercising this mode of communicating religious knowledge, on the idea, that children would afterwards remember and understand what they now learn. “Store the memory now,” say they, “and the children will get the benefit of these truths afterwards, when they are understood.” But why should not the child understand them now? Why should he not get the benefit of these glorious and important truths now? Why

should a child be kept in ignorance of God, and the great concerns of religion and eternity, upon a mere chance, that these truths shall hereafter be remembered and digested? But even granting that these truths might afterwards be remembered, have they considered the consequences to which their conclusion leads them? Do they, or do they not consider this knowledge, which they are for indefinitely postponing, as necessary to salvation? If it be not, why teach the children at all? But if it be, who, with a heart strung with the common chords of humanity, can, to save themselves a little more trouble, suspend the eternal welfare of a soul upon such a far distant and very uncertain contingency! Can they, instead of exercising a little more pains and patience in pointing out the way of salvation to the children in a manner which they can understand, thoughtlessly content themselves with sowing seed by the way-side, where they know it cannot take root, while they have the solemn declaration of our Lord himself, that they who "hear the word, and understand it not," have it literally taken away from them by Satan?

Such considerations as these should lead every Christian to examine this subject with serious attention. It is no trifling matter, if we are thus neglecting and perverting the means which God has put into our hands to rescue the young from destruction, and train them up in the fear of the Lord. We repeat, that this object has not been wholly overlooked hitherto; thousands have been brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, through the Divine blessing on faithful Sabbath school instruction. But the remarks of Mr. Gall have, nevertheless, too adequate an apology in the manner in which the great majority of Sabbath schools are conducted. If a reform, therefore, be practicable, let it be effected. And we really do not see why the scholars may not be taught ideas as well as words. They are every day adding to their stock of ideas on secular subjects; and why may they not do the same in regard to religious truth? If they are very young, let them be fed with 'milk,'—present to their minds a single new truth at a time, and let the truths about which their powers are exercised be of the most simple kind. We apprehend that such exercises as the following, which we take from a section in one of Mr. Gall's books, designed for this very use, would seldom be tried unsuccessfully, even with the most obtuse intellect to be found in a whole Sabbath school:

"Analytical Exercise for Beginners.

[*"God made all things.*]

"Who made all things? What is here said about God? What did God do? What did God make? What things did God make? How many things did God make? What did God do to all things?"

[“ God at first made all things.”]

“ *When did God make all things? Who made all things at first? At what time did God make all things? What did God do to all things at first? When were all things made? How many things did God make at first?*” (Each of the questions in *italics*, relates to the mere idea contained in the words “ *at first*,” which by this repetition becomes equally familiar to the mind with the others, in the previous announcement.)

These simple examples disclose, as our readers will learn, what is a prominent feature of the Lesson System: it adopts, throughout, the catechetical mode of imparting instruction, but it furnishes, as far as we know, the only method of catechising by which ideas are communicated to the pupil's mind. In Mr. Gall's work, quoted above, entitled “ *The End and Essence of Sabbath School Teaching*,” we find an able analysis of the principles of catechising, in which, by a careful study of the various mental operations connected with the answering of questions, he clearly demonstrates the superior advantages of this mode of instruction above any other. The reader, perhaps, smiles at this remark, associating with it the acknowledged fact, that this is the only method of instructing ever pursued with children; but he will learn from the following observations, to which we invite special attention, that the same names do not always express the same things, and that what he and many others have been accustomed to call “ *catechising*,” may, in fact, have little or no resemblance to that exercise. The allusion in the first sentence is to the chapter containing the analysis just mentioned, and which we are obliged to omit:

“ The reader is now prepared, in some measure, for a few remarks on the nature of *Catechisms*, which have too frequently been confounded with *catechising*; and from what has been stated above, he will at once acknowledge, that however useful they may be,—and useful they certainly are,—yet their usefulness is not at all, at least very little, connected with catechetical exercises, properly so called. They have another and very different office to perform in the education of the child; an office, which, though necessary to *prepare* the child for the catechetical exercise, does not form a part of it, and must neither be confounded with it, nor substituted in its place.

“ It must be evident, that catechising is not so much designed to *communicate* truth for the first time, as it is to give a clearer and more extensive view of it, after it has once been communicated, and to rivet it still more firmly upon the memory. When any one asks me a question, he takes it for granted that I am already possessed of the knowledge necessary to give him an answer; or, at least, that there are in my mind sufficient materials, from which I shall be able of myself to compound it; but he never supposes that by merely asking the question, he has done any thing towards putting me in possession of the answer. He may, no doubt, by this means call my attention to the subject, and prepare my mind for information upon it; but still, the mere asking of the question neither gives me the information, nor extends the limits of my former knowledge.

“ The truths themselves, then, upon which the child is catechised, must, in some way or other, be previously communicated before this exercise can begin; and if the degrees of knowledge be equal in other respects, it is evidently to the child a matter of comparative indifference, whether it has been imparted verbally, or by

means of a text-book. In either case, the knowledge being in the mind, the catechetical exercise will go forward equally well, whether it has been received by him in the one way or in the other. But it is a matter of great importance in saving the time of the teacher, that there should be some intermediate link, or text-book, between him and the scholar, that the latter may be able to prepare his lesson where he is, at home, or absent from his teacher, as well as when he is present. Now this is the office which the catechism should, and does supply. It places the means of knowledge within the reach of the child, and supplies the materials which must afterwards be used for strengthening the mind, giving a clearer perception of the truths, and fixing them more deeply and firmly upon the memory.

"This will be more clearly understood by an example. When we wish to teach a child a doctrine contained in the Shorter Catechism,—suppose, for instance, the doctrine of Effectual Calling,—we may either give the information verbally, or we may direct him to the question in which he will find it. Now, it is obvious, that my verbal instructions on the subject, or his learning the answer, have nothing to do with, and include none of the leading characteristics of catechising. It is a necessary preparative for it, however; and after it has been communicated, when I again ask him, 'What is Effectual Calling?' he is prepared to give me an answer, which, before I told him verbally, or before he learned it from his catechism, could not have been done.

"This, therefore, is obviously the point where the catechetical exercise must *begin*; the fundamental principle of which, as has been shown, is, that the answer to every question be searched for by the child himself. Here he has, by learning the words, the materials from which his answers may be compounded; the culling of which is one of the best possible means of making them understood, both in themselves, and in their connexion with each other. This will at once appear, were we for a moment to attend to the operations of mind which immediately take place in a child, upon being successively asked, 'Whose work is Effectual Calling?' 'Of what does the Spirit convince us?' 'What does the Spirit do to our minds?' 'What is renewed?' &c.

"It is of importance also, at this point, for us to take notice of the difference between *reading* and *understanding* a proposition, and merely learning to *repeat* it, that we may the better appreciate the decided superiority of at once laying hold of the *idea*, without at all encumbering ourselves in the first instance with the *words*. This will be plain from the circumstances supposed; for if the child has received his knowledge of the doctrine from me *verbally*, or without a set form of words, and if I were in that case to ask him, 'What is Effectual Calling?' the question would necessarily lead to a long train of mental exercises, of the nature formerly described, for the purpose of giving the several parts of the answer in his *own words*, as he formerly *understood* them, or can now remember them. His account of the doctrine would, perhaps, be much less extensive in its various parts, but what of it was given would be *well understood*. But if, as is commonly the case, the child has learned the *words* of the catechism, and now, on being asked the same question, he merely *repeats them*, it must appear to all that even suppose the words repeated to be thoroughly understood, there is here no such mental exercise required as was in the former case, and by consequence, the same benefit cannot be received. This, it will be observed, is taking the case in its most favourable light, by supposing that the words in the answer have been understood; but the case becomes much stronger the moment we suppose, what commonly happens, that the words have been committed to memory without being properly, if at all understood. In this case, it is manifest that the mere mechanical repetition does nothing, but helps to deceive the teacher, who does not understand the words, by inducing him to believe that the child who so correctly repeats them must, like himself, also understand them. By attention to this single circumstance, we will at once be able, not only to appreciate the value of catechetical exercises, but at the same time, to perceive the use, and the only use which ought to be made of catechisms where the words of the answers are given at length: they are useful, very useful *preparations* for catechetical exercises, but they form no part of them; and the teacher who attempts to use them without a key, or at least who neglects to use them in the manner of a key, will find himself most

grievously disappointed, when he comes at last to collect together the fruits of his labour."—(*End and Essence*, Chap. VIII.)

These judicious remarks, which have doubtless been verified in the experience of many of our readers, will be more fully understood by adverting for a moment to the "Verbal Catechetical Exercise" of the Lesson System. This Exercise is "one by which every idea contained in any sentence, is made to occupy the whole attention, and to call into operation all the faculties of the child." The purpose of it is to unite the words and the ideas together, and it does so by presenting to the mind an idea, and then forcing it to search out from the sentence, the word which corresponds with that idea: by this action of the mind, the idea is united to the word, and it will be difficult, if not impossible, ever to separate them. We have already adduced one very simple illustration of this point, but it may not be amiss to quote another in this connexion:

"We announce to a child the following sentence:

"Abraham cast out Ishmael for mocking Isaac."

"In this sentence there are three persons mentioned, and there are two facts stated; so that it contains at least five ideas, which we may state thus:

"1. *Abraham.* 2. *Cast out.* 3. *Ishmael.* 4. *Mocking.* 5. *Isaac.*

"In order to present each of those ideas singly to the mind, without repeating the word in which it is expressed, we ask a question which can only be answered by the word in which the idea occurs; for example, to bring out the first, viz. Abraham, we ask;

"1. Abraham.

Who cast out Ishmael?

"2. Cast out.

What did Abraham do to Ishmael?

"3. Ishmael.

Whom did Abraham cast out?

"4. Mocking.

What did Ishmael do to Isaac?

"5. Isaac.

Whom did Ishmael mock?"

(Lesson System Magazine, Vol. I. No. 4.)

It is very obvious, that this mode of catechising calls all the powers of the child into action, and concentrates his attention upon a single point at a time. His ambition is excited by having presented before his mind a single definite object, dissociated from all others, and which he is encouraged to believe is fully within his reach. Repeated efforts ending in success, his feelings became more and more enlisted, and he is prompted by every fresh question to some untried exercise of his puny powers. In this manner the process of mental discipline is commenced, when the pupil is acquiring the first rudiments of knowledge; for it is not to be overlooked, that the method of catechising here prescribed, seeks to communicate ideas, while every other, (as for instance, that on which the "Union Questions" are framed) "is designed to assist the teacher in ascertaining what knowledge has been already acquired, or to afford the child an opportunity of knowing whether its task has been properly prepared or not."

The questions in catechisms are not formed from any previous announcement which has been given, and they refer to facts. The questions in the Verbal Exercise are formed from announcements previously given, and they refer to the words of that announcement. The answers in catechisms are only an exercise of the memory; the answers in the Verbal Exercise are an exercise of the judgment. In the latter case, the answer has to be found out by the child himself; in the former, it is prepared for him in the catechism. Were there any doubt upon this subject, it would be dispelled by a consideration of the fact, that in the Lesson System we have both of those forms of catechising; that they are used for different purposes, and are never mistaken for each other.

It is one of the peculiarities of this system that it teaches the alphabet itself, by a sort of catechetical exercise; and that not until the child's powers have been somewhat invigorated by means of a previous catechising on very simple announcements, like those which we first quoted. Passing by this point, however, with the single remark that Mr. Gall's mode of teaching the alphabet is perfectly unique, we proceed to notice another particular which will occasion our readers some surprise. The heartless exercise of spelling, that initiatory penance, which every stripling is compelled to perform during so many tedious weeks, before he is admitted to the marvellous mysteries of reading, is unknown to the Lesson System. We do not say that it is so absolutely dispensed with that a child may not often be obliged to master a word letter by letter; but what we mean is, that every child is trained to read as soon as he is familiar with the alphabet; and that there is none of that sing-song drilling on "words of one syllable," "words of two syllables," "trisyllables," "polysyllables," &c. which constitutes so large a portion of the music of every district school. "I have tried the experiment," says an English Sabbath school missionary, "upon several children below six years of age, who barely knew their letters, and in fifteen minutes have taught them to read distinctly, without spelling or miscalling a word, the five first verses of the Gospel of John, to the no little astonishment of their parents!" If there be any room to suspect that this was merely an exercise of the memory, and nothing more, we refer to a similar case which can hardly admit of that construction. Mr. Gall, being in London, went one Sabbath into a school where "the spelling system was predominant," and perceived in one of the classes a young man about sixteen years of age, taking lessons with children of five and six. "I joined" he says, "this little group; and on complimenting the young man on his docility, the teacher informed me that he had been three months at the school, and had

already mastered the alphabet, all the letters of which he now knew; that he was commencing the spelling; and as he had no time to improve himself at home, he (the teacher) had always dedicated a larger portion of the time to him, than to the young children of his class. I asked permission to give him a lesson, which was readily granted. On ascertaining that the boy really knew his alphabet, although he had never even attempted to read, I procured a New Testament, and in a space of time considerably within half an hour, enabled him to read correctly, with the understanding, every word of four verses of the chapter I chose out for him." After giving a few verbal instructions to the boy, directing him to read over the whole chapter when he went home, and to come in the afternoon and read it to his teacher, Mr. Gall took his leave, without being known. At the end of three weeks, he was very unexpectedly introduced into the same school again. He found his pupil reading in Genesis, and was informed by the teacher, that at three o'clock on the same day the young man got his lesson, (just referred to,) he had read to him twenty-nine verses of the chapter prescribed by Mr. Gall.

Our limits will only allow us to give our readers a hint of the process by which such wonderful results are accomplished. We copy the following paragraph on the subject from the "Key to the One Book," the "One Book" being designed to teach children the alphabet, the art of reading, &c. The "Introductory Exercises" are simple sentences, like the following, and about twenty in number:

"It is bad for men to do any ill. 'Let us try to be like our God, &c.'

"When the children's minds," says Mr. Gall, "have become active and vigorous by the catechetical exercises, and when all the letters, double letters, and terminations have become familiar, they may then be taught to read the Introductory Exercises, which will now be both easy and pleasant. The children are told that the first letter (see example above) is a capital I, and the same as 'top-dotted i,' and the first child is then asked 'What kind of letter is that?' The next is asked, 'Of what letter is this the capital?' and the others in their order, 'What is its small letter like?' 'What has it on the top?' 'What is that letter called?' 'Spell the first word.' He then points out to them how the letters form the words, by repeating the letters by their power sounds, as pronounced in the word, and then pronouncing them together, 'i, t, it.' They are all made to pronounce it, one after the other, and then the next word 'is,' is taught in the same manner. The teacher then asks each child in order, making them take places when they do not answer correctly, 'Spell (*from their books*) the first word.' 'What is that word?' 'Spell the second word.' 'What is that word?' 'What is the first word?' 'What is the second word?' 'Spell the word after 'is,' 'That is 'bad.' 'What is b-a-d?' 'Read from the beginning.' 'It is what?' 'Spell the word after 'bad:.' 'That is 'for.' 'What is f-o-r?' and so on to the end of the line, catechising on each clause; never allowing the children audibly to spell one word twice; and teaching till each word in the line can be read by each child, as soon as it is seen. The same thing must be done with each line in its order, the teacher taking care that the children never repeat the lines by rote without reading them. For preventing this, the teacher may call upon them to read insolated words out of their connexion, to read lines backwards, &c., and he should

upon no account pass to another line till the present, and all that have preceded it, can be read well."

When all the Introductory Exercises have been mastered, the children go over them again for the purpose of reading, and getting the explanations of the words. For example, the first scholar, or the next if he cannot do it, is required to give the meaning of the word "bad," and the line is then read with a substitution of this explanation, in place of the original word. This process is carried on until each pupil is able to read every line in the same manner, all the important words being represented by their synonyms or equivalent phrases. For a more particular account of this exercise, we must refer our readers to the "One Book" and its "Key."

A portion of this "Key," and of the Key to the "First Initiatory Catechism," is devoted to "Progressive Exercises for teaching children to draw lessons from the Scripture." The first of these exercises are exceedingly simple, and they gradually become more difficult. An idea of them may be formed from the two following examples, one of which is taken from the first, and the other from the seventh section of the Key to the Catechism just mentioned :

"Adam was (1) *holy*.

"Who was holy? What was Adam? What does that teach you?—*Lesson*. We should be holy.

"(1) Free from sin.

"121. Jonah *confessed* his sin and *prayed* for mercy.

"Who confessed his sin? What did Jonah do? What did Jonah confess? What did Jonah do besides confessing his sin? Who prayed? For what did Jonah pray?

"How many circumstances are mentioned in this passage? (*Two*.) What is the first? (*Jonah confessed his sin.*) What does that teach you?—*Lesson*. We should confess our sin.—What is the second circumstance mentioned in this passage? (*Jonah prayed for mercy.*) What does that teach you?—*Lesson*. We should pray for mercy.

"*Explanations*.—*Confessed*; Felt and acknowledged. *Prayed*; Supplicated God. *Mercy*; Pity and pardon.

"*S. References*.—Jonah i. 10.; ii. 2."

From exercises like these, the children advance by degrees to those of a higher and more complex character. The grand object in view, is to impart to them, or to teach them how they may attain, *the practical knowledge of the Scriptures*. All of Mr. Gall's books are constructed with immediate reference to this great end. Some of them are devoted to the doctrines, and others to the historical statements of the Sacred Volume. The following

scheme presents at one view the titles of the books, and the order in which they are to be used.

“SCHEME,

Showing the order in which the three Exercises of the day are to be carried on.

DOCTRINAL.	HISTORICAL.	
I.	II.	III.
First Initiatory Catechism, 1st. Course. <i>Taught by the Analysis in the Key.</i>	Introduction to the Lesson System, 1st. Course. <i>Lesson Extempore.</i>	Progressive Exercises of First Initiatory Catechism.
First Initiatory Catechism, 2d. Course. <i>Committed to memory.</i>	Introduction to the Lesson System, 2d. Course. <i>Lessons prepared at home.</i>	First Step to Old Testament History, 1st. Course.
Second Initiatory Catechism, 1st. Course.	Help to St. Luke's Gospel.	First Step to Old Testament History, 2d. Course.
<i>Verbal Exercise.</i> <i>General Exercise.</i> <i>Numerical Exercise.</i> <i>Explanations.</i>	Help to the Gospels. Help to the Acts of the Apostles.	<i>Help to Genésis."</i>
Second Initiatory Catechism, 2d. Course, <i>With all the Exercises.</i> Shorter Catechism.		

Our limits will not allow us to enter into a description of the several books here enumerated. Mr. Gall has wisely judged that few, if any children, are capable of understanding the Shorter Catechism without much previous doctrinal instruction, and he has, therefore, prepared two catechisms of a more simple form, which are to be thoroughly understood before the other is taken up. In the same way, each of the books named in the above course (the whole of which occupies about three years,) is more difficult than those which precede it. In some the exercises are more, in others less numerous; but every example, whether doctrinal or historical, illustrates the inspired declaration, that “all Scripture is profitable.” The nature of the various exercises will be understood by a little attention to the following example, and the explanatory remarks which we subjoin. The example is the first one in the “Key to the Second Initiatory Catechism;” the catechism itself, which is given to the children, containing only the Question and Answer, the General Exercise, part of the Numerical Exercise, and the Explanations; and some of the catechisms have the Proofs instead of the Numerical Exercise.

"1. Q. *Who made you and all mankind.*

"A. The great God, who, *in the beginning*, for his own glory, created all things of nothing, and very good, made us of dust; and always preserved us, and every creature which he has formed.

"1. VERBAL AND GENERAL EXERCISE.

"*Who created all things? What is God here said to be? When did God create all things? What did God do in the beginning? For what purpose did God create all things? What did God do for his own glory? For whose glory did God create all things? What did God create? How many things did God create? Of what did God create all things? What was created of nothing?* [We omit the remainder of this exercise.]

"2. NUMERICAL EXERCISE.

"How many things are here stated as being done by God?

"(Three.—1. He created all things. 2. He made us. 3. He preserves us and all his creatures.) What is the first? the second? the third?

How many things are here mentioned regarding our own creation? (Two. 1. We were made by God. 2. We were made of dust.) What is the first? &c. How many things are here mentioned regarding God's creating all things? (Four. 1. He created them in the beginning. 2. He created them for his own glory. 3. He created them of nothing. 4. He created them very good.) What is the first? &c.

How many classes are here mentioned as being under God's preserving care? (Two.—1. We ourselves. 2. Every creature which God has formed.) What is the first, &c.

3. DOCTRINES SEPARATED.

How many doctrines [or truths] are contained in this answer? (Seven.—1. God in the beginning created all things. 2. God created all things for his own glory. 3. God created all things of nothing. 4. God created all things at first very good. 5. God made us of dust. 6. God always preserves us. 7. God preserves all his creatures.) What is the first, &c.

4. EXPLANATIONS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

In the beginning, at the commencement of time. *His own glory*, the purpose of showing to his creatures the glory of his perfections. *Created*, brought into being. *All things*, every thing which exists, &c. [Remainder omitted.]

5. DOCTRINES PROVED.

1. (1.) *God in the beginning created all things.* Gen. i. 1. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

2. (2.) *God created all things for his own glory.*—Prov. xvi. 4. The Lord hath made all things for himself.

3. (3.) *God created all things of nothing.*—Heb. xi. 3. Things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

[The remaining proofs we omit.]

6. Lessons from the Doctrines.

From these doctrines we learn,

(1.) That, as God is the maker and owner of all things, we ought to be contented and thankful for what he bestows upon us.

(2.) That we should dedicate our talents and possessions to the glory of God.

(3.) That God can supply us with all that we need.

(4.) That we should hate sin, and strive to be holy.

(5.) That we should be humble, and always be preparing for death.

(6.) That we should take notice of, and rely upon, the care and providence of God.

(7.) That we should, in imitation of God, attend to the wants, and endeavour to increase the comforts of others.

7. APPLICATION OF THE LESSONS.

With, and for what should we be contented and thankful? (Lesson 1.)

What should we dedicate to the glory of God? (2.)

With what can God always supply us? (3.)

What should we strive to be? (4.)

For what should we always be preparing? (5.)

Upon what should we always rely? (6.)

What should we endeavour to do to others? (7.)

8. DEVOTIONAL EXERCISE from the Answer.

Adoration.—Thou art the great God, who in the beginning, for thine own glory made all things of nothing, and very good who made us of dust, and who always preserves us, and every creature which thou hast formed.

9. DEVOTIONAL EXERCISE from the Lessons.

O Lord, (1) Thou art the maker and owner of all things, do thou make us contented and thankful for all that thou, in thy kind providence, bestowest upon us. Enable us (2) to dedicate all our talents and possessions to thy service and glory; who (3) art able, by thine almighty power, to supply us with all that we need. May we (4) hate sin, and constantly and perseveringly strive to be holy. Make us (5) increasingly humble; and enable us to look forward to, and prepare for death; and may we while in this world (6) take notice of, and rely upon thy gracious providence and care; (7) and in imitation of thy universal goodness, may we always attend to the wants, and endeavour to increase the comforts of others around us.

10. PARAPHRASE FORMED.

The great God, who, [at the commencement of time,] for [the purpose of showing to his creatures the glory of his perfections,] [brought into being] [every thing which exists,] [from no substance which previously existed,] and [all in a state of perfection,] made us of [earth, or the dust of the ground,] and [constantly, and without intermission,] [keeps in being, and prevents from falling back into nothing,] [all the human race,] and every [created thing, animate or inanimate,] which he has [contrived and made.]"

1. The "Verbal Exercise" we have already explained. The "General Exercise," which is printed in italics, and included in the Verbal, brings out the substance of the answer, and 'enables the scholar to re-construct the sentence, by allowing to each idea its proper place and connection.'

2. The "Numerical, or Analytical Exercise," 'communicates truth in portions, separating one part from another, till one be understood; and then, putting the two together, presents both in connection. As the pupil advances in this exercise, it enables him to take a discriminating view of every subject, to divide it into its component parts, and by this means he is enabled ultimately, readily to detect both false premises and erroneous conclusions.'

3. The "Separating of the Doctrines" or truths, is an exercise of manifest importance, since it very much facilitates the selection and application of proof texts; indeed, a clear appre-

hension of the doctrines, is absolutely indispensable to an enlightened use of proofs. And this exercise is also highly instructive, inasmuch as it helps to unfold thoroughly the meaning of every passage. The children are required to separate the truths, by taking them one by one as they occur in the answer, and throwing each into the form of a general proposition, as exhibited above. This practice soon renders them very skilful in resolving sentences, however complex, into their simple elements.

4. and 10. The design of these two exercises is "to impart to the pupil such an ease in speaking, and such a command of words, as will enable him readily to communicate to others, the knowledge which he has himself acquired." The "Paraphrase" may be formed extempore, or it may be written. The words of the Answer, which need an explanation, being printed in italics, the child is required to substitute a meaning of his own in place of some of these words previously designated by his teacher. This exercise is repeated several times, until he is able to give the whole answer correctly in his own words, similar to the paraphrase in the key. A child may thus be trained not only to great facility in composition by acquiring a familiar knowledge of synonymous words and phrases, but also to uncommon quickness and precision in thinking.

5. "Proving the Doctrines." As this exercise refers every truth to its inspired source, it deserves peculiar attention. The pupil, with the book in his hand, is catechised on the proof, to see whether he understands it, and then required to point out its connection with the doctrine. To impress these truths the more deeply on the mind, Mr. Gall has prepared a Primer, entitled "Doctrines in Rhyme," which, he says, should be reviewed in connexion with this exercise, in order that the children may avail themselves of that singular tenacity with which they retain stanzas on the memory. "The pupil thus carries with him into life," the author observes, "a small, but well arranged body of divinity, in such a form as to be always under his control, and which, though he be not necessitated always to quote it in the poetic form, will never fail to supply materials on any religious subject when it is requisite to give any one 'a reason of the hope that is in him.'" We quote a single illustration:—

Teacher. Who created all things?

Scholar. All things were created by God.

[*T.* Repeat that doctrine in rhyme.

S. The Almighty Lord with matchless power,
This world at first did make,
And all the host of heaven at once,
He into being spake.]"

6. "Drawing Lessons from the Doctrines." This exercise needs little explanation. Each pupil in turn is required to separate and prove a doctrine, and then to draw some lesson from it, which he may give either extempore, or from his memory, or from a paper.

7. We come now to the grand distinctive characteristic of the Lesson System, and that which has furnished its name. Instead of describing minutely the various modes by which children may be taught to derive some practical benefit from all that they learn, we shall be excused for quoting, at considerable length. Mr. Gall's observations on this branch of education.

"It is the dexterous use of surgical instruments which alone constitutes *surgery*; it is the ability to speak and write grammatically, which alone deserves the name of grammar; and, in like manner, it is *the capacity of using and applying knowledge to useful purposes*, which alone deserves the name of *education*. Why this fundamental principle, in the first of sciences, has been so long neglected, we stop not here to inquire. That it continue to be so no longer, ought to be the wish, and the endeavour of every friend and well-wisher of his country.

In respect to this particular object in education, we must here again speak in the singular number; for we know of no system of education in which the *application* of knowledge is systematically taught, except in the Lesson System.

The method by which this great object is accomplished, is not less easy than effective. By the simple operation of deducing practical lessons from every subject taught, or fact communicated, whether religious, moral, or natural, the pupil is let into the important secret, that he, himself, is personally and deeply interested in all that he is taught. He is trained to perceive that every circumstance, or piece of information communicated to him, has a use, and may be used; and that by a little attention and care on his part, he may take advantage of its utility, and turn it to some good purpose in his own experience. There is no limit to the power of this simple principle. It embraces every subject which can, by any means, be rendered useful; and it is a most valuable and accurate test, by which to try the value of any branch of popular education. If the subject taught be at all useful, this principle in the system at once detects it, and trains the pupil of *himself* to perceive when, how, and for what purpose it should be used. If this cannot be done, the subject is obviously *useless*, and therefore ought not to be taught. It embraces every subject of a religious nature, whether of doctrine, or precept, or example; and extends its range to every useful truth in natural history, natural philosophy, and personal or domestic economy. He is, by this means, taught the power of giving a new and extended value to every thing in nature, and in art; of impressing the stamp of utility upon every truth, and turning it into a coin, current and valuable in all circumstances, and on every occasion. We shall endeavour to illustrate our meaning by a few examples.

A child, for instance, is taught, that "God made all things," but this is a mere barren truth, as long as he knows not what use he is to make of it; and this, the reader knows is but too seldom done. But the Lesson System communicates the truth for the purpose of making it practically useful, precisely in the same manner as similar facts are communicated to the young in ordinary life. Why does the parent warn the child not to hurt or purloin the kite, the doll, or the baby-house, because it was *made* by its companion, but to teach it, by the communication of the fact, to respect the property of others, and to be grateful for such an extent of participation in its use, as the maker, and therefore the *owner*, may be pleased to allow? This is precisely the principle of drawing lessons, which is universally practised by every *practical* person, although, perhaps, without system, and often without design. But the Lesson System has for the first time, reduced the principle to a set of sim-

ple rules, which even a child can apply. "God made all things," therefore "all things belong to God." This is the *doctrinal* lesson; and the *practical* lesson from it is equally simple. If all things are God's because he made them, the pupil is taught to draw the lesson, that he should not be discontented with what he has, but should be grateful to God for what he has been pleased to bestow upon him."

"To sum up the whole, in one bright example.—The pupil is taught the history of our Lord, and of his transactions upon earth. The Saviour is exhibited to him as holy, humble, kind, merciful, and forgiving; going about continually doing good; submitting to injuries with patience; reproving with gentleness; advising and exhorting with earnestness; and praying for his tormentors and murderers. But why is all this done? Not that the pupil may coldly look upon the picture, thus drawn by the pen of inspiration, to admire, and then to forget it. No:—It is designed as a model for his imitation; and the Lesson System, by teaching him to apply all the various circumstances to his own conduct, in the form of lessons, enables him to grow into the same image and likeness. He is to look upon the picture till he resembles it. He is to contemplate, and study the character and conduct of his Lord, under the various temptations and trials to which he was exposed, that he might make it the *rule* of his own life, the *pattern* of his conduct, in similar or analogous circumstances. He is, in short, "to behold as in a glass, the glory of the Lord; that he may be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord."

In order to show that the scheme here proposed is perfectly practicable, we subjoin a few specimens of the application of Scripture lessons by a class of children, who were examined, after very little instruction, from the "First Step," on Old Testament history, from the time of Adam till the death of Moses:

"A child was asked, "When you see others going heedlessly on in the commission of sin, what should you do?" and answered, "I should warn them of their danger;" and referred to Noah who warned the wicked, while building the ark.

Again, "When people about you are given to quarrel, what should you do?" "We should endeavour to make peace;" and referred to Abram endeavouring to remain at peace with Lot's herdsmen.

"When two situations occur, one where you will get more money, but where the people are wicked and ungodly; and the other, where you will get less money, but have better company; which should you choose?" "The good company though with less money;" and referred to Lot's desire for riches taking him to live in wicked Sodom, where he lost all he had."

We may, perhaps, quote some further examples of this kind before we conclude. The two "Devotional Exercises," numbered 8 and 9 under the example copied from the Catechism, explain themselves.

We will here present our readers with a single example from one of Mr. Gall's historical books, his "Help to Luke." The remarks already made will enable them to understand the various exercises. We preface this by the corresponding passage in the "Union Questions," that the two may be compared; the verse is the 34th in the 10th chapter of Luke.

Union Questions.—"How did the Samaritan show his compassion?"

What does this conduct of the Samaritan teach you?"

Help to Luke.—34. "And went to him, and (1.) bound up (2.) his wounds,

- (3.) *pouring in oil and wine, and (4.) set him on his own beast, and brought him to (5.) an inn, and (6.) took care of him.*
1. Stopped the bleeding, dressed, and wrapped.—2. The cuts and bruises which he had received.—3. Washing and anointing them with.—4. Walking himself he put the helpless man.—5. A place of public entertainment.—6. Putting him to bed, watched over.
34. To whom did the Samaritan go? *What did the Samaritan do to the man? What did he bind up? Who bound up his wounds? &c.* [We omit the greater part of this exercise.]
- Lesson.—The Samaritan went to the man and bound up his wounds.—We should not only pity the distressed, but we should endeavour also to relieve them. The Samaritan used oil and wine for the recovery of the man.—We should not, when we can afford it, grudge a little expense to relieve the distressed. The Samaritan set the man on his own beast.—We should not in acts of charity or mercy, grudge a little personal inconvenience or bodily fatigue. The Samaritan brought the man to an inn and took care of him.—We should endeavour to complete those acts of charity or mercy which we have been enabled to begin.*

After having quoted so liberally from Mr. Gall, it is not our intention to enter into an elaborate discussion of the several features of this system of education. In drawing this protracted article to a close, however, there are two or three points on which we shall offer a very few remarks.

In examining the Paraphrastic Exercise of the Lesson System, we have been forcibly reminded of the deficiency in the existing schemes of instruction, which this Exercise is designed to supply. We have always thought that the business of "composition," (a technicality familiar to every school-boy,) was too much neglected in the education of youth. Its importance is not appreciated, nor does it occupy that prominent rank in the studies prescribed by any of our seminaries, to which it is justly entitled. From the highest universities down, through every grade, to the district and Sabbath schools, there is an urgent necessity for reform in this matter. We could name colleges of the first respectability, the students of which are required to exhibit original dissertations only eight or ten times in the course of a year; and even in those cases, they are considered as complying with the statutes of the institution, if they present the merest anatomy of an essay, which ought not to pass muster in an ordinary grammar school. As a natural consequence of this practice, multitudes of young men who are sent out into the world with a diploma in their pocket, certifying (what might not, otherwise, be suspected,) that they have received a liberal education, are deplorably deficient in that command of language and fluency of expression, on which their success and usefulness materially depend. They may, perhaps, write with grammatical accuracy, though even this is in some cases problematical, but their style betrays, at once, the juvenile author, and exhibits neither manly vigour nor classic ease

and elegance. And in the field of extemporaneous debate they learn, frequently at a severe and painful sacrifice of feeling, that they are too "slow of speech" even to cope with an unskilful antagonist, or to set forth in any thing like its appropriate importance, a subject which may be pressing upon their own minds with a weight almost beyond endurance.

It is easy to discover whence the evil in question originates, and to whom belongs the responsibility of perpetuating it. Whenever our teachers and literary professors shall begin to place a just estimate on the acquisition of which we have been speaking, then, and not till then, will their pupils cease to regard the exercise of "composition," as a piece of unprofitable drudgery. It is obvious too, that the reform must commence in our primary schools. The irksomeness of this exercise to the youth in our academies and colleges, arises chiefly from the entire neglect of it in their early education. Were children habituated to the exercise, they would derive a constantly increasing gratification from it, as the gradual development and growing strength of their faculties should enable them to lay hold of subjects with a more vigorous grasp, and to bring to the discussion of them a more comprehensive range of thought. For this reason, we regard that feature of the Lesson System which has occasioned these remarks, as adding materially to its value.

Another peculiarity of this system, and one which promises, like the last, to supply an important deficiency, is seen in its "Devotional Exercises." We do not forget that under the existing modes of instruction, scholars may be often reminded of the duty of prayer, and that children are frequently taught to repeat forms of prayer by their parents; but we know of no plan, besides the one here proposed, which aims by systematic efforts to teach them the precise nature of this duty, and the method of performing it intelligently. That there are difficulties in the way of communicating to the juvenile mind clear apprehensions of an exercise so essentially spiritual, and especially of enlisting their feelings in the discharge of it, we do not doubt; but we are confident that no one, who reads Mr. Gall's observations on this subject, will despair of witnessing the literal fulfilment of that inspired declaration, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise." We esteem it as one of the chief excellencies of the system, that it thus turns into a devotional use each doctrine and its appropriate lessons; for we can conceive of nothing which is better calculated to impress the truths on the memory, enforced by the immediate sanction of the great Author of truth, and to inculcate those sentiments of reverence and pious fear, of which the mind is so much more susceptible in childhood

than at any subsequent period. Nor is it unworthy of mention as a collateral benefit resulting from this practice, that those who are thus early trained will acquire a fluency and richness of expression in prayer, which may be of essential service to themselves and others in after life. Were this system generally adopted, the exercise of prayer would soon lose its frigid formality, and be invested, even in the estimation of the world, with something of that sacred dignity and impressiveness which belong to its true character.

A single word as to the "Application of the Lessons." Apart from this feature, the Lesson System is a manifest advance in the science of education, but with it, we consider its author as having established his claim to rank amongst the benefactors of the age. No finite mind can estimate the blessings which might be expected to flow, from the universal adoption of a system, which thus effectually links all its pupils by strong, though unseen bonds, with the realities of a future state of existence. The child, habituated on the one hand to draw some practical maxim from every Scripture expression which he sees, and on the other to connect each incident of his life with a corresponding event recorded in the sacred volume, would by his own acts, be continually summoning around himself the objects and interests of the invisible world. He would live with an abiding consciousness that the eye of Omniscience was upon him; and in moments of temptation or unguarded passion, the fearful warnings of Holy Writ would rush unbidden upon his soul, and recall him to his duty. It would require no common degree of hardihood to impel a man to the perpetration of crime, whose conscience was thus armed with the delegated terrors of the law, and who felt at every step he was striking chords which sent their vibrations upwards to the throne of God, and onward to the judgment seat of Christ. We do not assert that even then we should have found a complete antidote to vice, but we do affirm that a most salutary restraint would be imposed upon the corrupt propensities of the human heart, and that we should be provided with the surest safeguard against the practice of iniquity which it is possible to have, short of the universal conversion of men to God. We regard it, therefore, as the highest recommendation of the Lesson System of education, that it aims to accomplish by simple, but efficient means, a result so noble and philanthropic, and so full of promise to the Church, as that which is here contemplated. We are aware that the same end has been attempted in the existing system of instruction, but with how little prospect of success, as compared with the system under review, we need not stop to determine.

It was not our design to delineate all the minute peculiarities of Mr. Gall's System. The end which we had in view will be attained, should the imperfect outline which we have sketched of its exercises, and the principles on which they are formed, serve to call the attention of the friends of Sabbath schools to this subject. There is no country in the world, whose prosperity is so intimately associated with these schools as our own. Institutions founded on the principle of popular representation, can be sustained only amongst an intelligent and virtuous people: and considered, therefore, with reference merely to our political interests, every improvement which adds efficiency to our plans for storing the minds of the young with the great truths of scriptural Christianity, may be viewed as a national blessing. But when our thoughts stretch forward into eternity, we are lost in endeavouring to estimate the weighty results which might be expected to flow from even a non-essential modification in the present mode of instruction. Who can tell what consequences might ensue, were one additional truth of fundamental importance to be brought to bear in its divine energy upon the conscience of a single individual! And when we consider that this truth is "precious" and imperishable "seed," which, under the nurturing care of the Holy Spirit shall spring up and bear eternal fruit, the mind faints in attempting to conceive the magnitude of the blessings which would be secured, by the adoption of a system which should every year bring the word of God into more immediate contact with thousands and millions of immortal souls. Whether the scheme of instruction which we have been considering be such a system, it is not for us to say; but it certainly is one which merits a candid examination on the part of all who are interested (and who are not?) in the education of youth. We commend it especially to the ministers of the Gospel, and to all superintendents and teachers of Sabbath schools. It has already been introduced, as we are informed, into a few schools in the city of New York, where its success has been complete. We are surprised that it is not more generally known, and that the whole series of Mr. Gall's books has not been long ago republished here.* The system can no longer be regarded as an experiment, which may or may not end in a mortifying failure: its efficacy has been fairly demonstrated, and the proofs are before the world. It comes to us recommended by names of high distinction in the literary circles of Scotland; and still more, sustained by facts

* Whenever this is done, we hope that they will be reprinted *as they are*. If they are not precisely such books as we need, others can be prepared on the same plan. We understand that Mr. Gall is much displeased with the liberties taken by the American editors in their republication of one or two of his works.

which incredulity cannot resist, nor prejudice evade. We know not how we can more appropriately conclude this long article, than by stating a few of these facts, which we find recorded in a pamphlet printed at Edinburgh, and entitled, "Effects of the Lesson System of Teaching, as ascertained by actual Experiment." Could we copy the whole pamphlet, our readers would concur in the opinion that some of the "effects" which it details, are without a parallel in the annals of education.

The only experiment of the results of which our limits will permit us to give a full account, was held at Aberdeen, and was witnessed and reported by the following gentlemen: The Very Rev. Dr. William Jack, Principal of King's College, Aberdeen; James Bentley, Esq., A.M., Professor of Oriental Languages; the Rev. John Murray; the Rev. Abercrombie L. Gordon; and the Rev. David Simpson, ministers of Aberdeen. The children were selected by the three clergymen just named, in the following manner. After examining as thoroughly as possible the children collected from various schools, they selected from them twenty-two "who seemed to be the most ignorant, and to understand none of the three fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, viz. our connexion, as sinners, with Adam; our connexion with Christ as the Saviour, and the means by which sinners receive an interest in Christ's salvation." From these twenty-two children, Mr. Gall made up a class of ten, whom he instructed for eight days, occupying two hours each day. In the civil history, biography, and natural philosophy department, however, he had to take the children for half an hour at mid-day, some of them being employed in business, who, therefore, could only attend during part of their dinner-hour. At the expiration of this time, the children were examined at a public meeting, held in one of the churches at Aberdeen.

"They were first interrogated minutely on the following doctrines of Revelation, *seriatim*, a list of which was handed to the Chairman, viz. 1. Of the Bible, its design and authority. 2. Of Adam, and our relation to him in the covenant of works. 3. The consequences of the fall; 1st. In the loss of eternal life, and why; 2d. In bringing down the curse on all mankind. 4. Why sin will be visited with punishment, notwithstanding God's perfections of goodness and mercy. 5. The utter inability of man to help himself. 6. The origin of the plan of salvation by Christ. 7. The reasons why repentance cannot save us. 8. The reasons why good works cannot save us. 9. How the curse is removed by Christ. 10. How eternal life is restored by Christ. 11. Why Christ, the Son of God, alone, and no created being, could accomplish man's redemption. 12. The nature and exercise of Christ's offices as Prophet, Priest, and King. 13. How we receive an interest in Christ's salvation. 14. Why faith, repentance, and new obedience, although necessary, are not meritorious. 15. Of the last judgment. 16. The grounds upon which the righteous will be acquitted, and the wicked condemned, at the last judgment.

"After being examined generally and satisfactorily on each of these heads, the chairman called upon some of them individually, who were carefully examined, and showed

by their answers, that they severally understood the nature of the above doctrines, and their mutual relation to each other.

"They were then examined on the Old Testament history, from the account of the death of Moses, downwards, to that of the revolt of the Ten Tribes, in the reign of Rehoboam. Here they distinctly stated and described all the leading circumstances of the narrative comprised in the 'First Step,' whose brief, but comprehensive outline they appeared, in various instances, to have filled up at home, by reading in their Bibles the corresponding chapters. From the various incidents in the Sacred Record, with which they had thus been brought so closely in contact, they drew, as they proceeded, a variety of practical lessons, evincing that they clearly perceived, not only the nature and qualities of the actions, whether good or evil, of the persons there set before them, but the use that ought to be made of such descriptions of character, as examples or warnings, intended for application to the ordinary business of life.

"They were next examined, in the same way, on several sections of the New Testament, from which they had also learned to point out the practical lessons, so important and necessary for the regulation of the heart and life. The meeting, as well as this committee, were surprised at the minute and accurate acquaintance which they displayed with the multiplicity of objects presented to them; at the great extent of the record over which they had travelled; and at the facility with which they seemed to draw useful lessons from almost every occurrence mentioned in the passages which they had read. But the most important part of the exercise, that which showed more particularly the great value of this system, and with which the meeting were especially struck, was the appropriate *application* of the lessons from Scripture, which they had previously drawn. They were desired to suppose themselves placed in a great variety of situations, and were asked how they ought to conduct themselves in each of these. A few examples may be given, though it is quite impossible to do justice to the subject. A boy, for instance, was asked, 'If your parents should become infirm and poor, how ought you to act towards them?' 'I ought,' replied the boy, 'to work, and help them.' And being asked, 'Whence he drew that lesson?' he referred to the conduct of Ruth, who supported Naomi and herself by gleaning in the field. A girl was asked, 'If your mother was busy, and had more to do in the family than she could easily accomplish, what ought you to do?' Her answer was, 'I ought to give her assistance;' and she referred to the conduct of Saul, in assisting his father to recover the asses which were lost; and to that of David, in feeding his father's sheep, when his brothers were at the wars. A little boy was asked, 'If your parents were too indulgent, and seemed to give you all your own will, what ought you to do?' 'I ought not to take it,' replied the boy, very readily; and added, that it was taking his own will that caused the ruin of the prodigal son. Another boy being asked, 'If you should become rich, what would be your duty to the poor?' answered, 'I ought to be good to the poor; but it would be better to give them work than to give them money; for Boaz did not give Ruth grain, but bade his shearers let some fall, that she might get it by her own industry.'

"Mr. Gall here stated, that at this point it had been intended that the experiment, as originally projected, should close; but that the interest which these exercises had excited in the minds of the children, at a very early period of the experiment, had induced him, short as was the time he had prescribed to himself, to proceed with them to some other branches of education, embraced by the Lesson System of teaching, viz. 'Civil History,' 'Biography,' &c. For this purpose, he had selected four of the class that had now been examined, and four other children who could attend, and had met with them at their dinner hour, for five or six days, and the result he would now very shortly exhibit to the meeting.

"They were accordingly examined on that portion of the history of England, embraced by the reign of Charles I. and the commonwealth; and from the details of this period, they drew, from the *same circumstances*, or announcements, political, domestic, and personal lessons, as these applied to a nation, to a family, and to individuals; lessons which it ought to be the leading design of history to furnish, though, both by the writers and readers of history, this committee are sorry to say, they are too generally overlooked.

“They were then examined on Biography, the life of the late Rev. John Newton being chosen for that purpose; from whose history they also drew some very useful practical lessons, and seemed very desirous of enlarging, but had to be restrained, as the time would not permit.

“They were next interrogated, scientifically, as to the production, the nature, and the properties of several familiar objects, with the view of showing how admirably calculated the Lesson System is for furnishing the young with a knowledge of natural science, and of the arts. One of their little companions being raised before them on a bench, they described every part of his dress, from the bonnet downwards, detailing every process and stage of the manufacture. The bonnet, which was put on his head for this purpose, the coat, the silk handkerchief, the cotton vest, were all traced respectively from the sheep, the egg of the silk-worm, and the cotton-pod. The buttons, which were of brass, were stated to be a composition of copper and zinc, which were separately and scientifically described, with the reasons assigned, (as good as could be given,) for their admixture, in the composition of brass. Here they also found no want either of capacity or of materials for practical lessons. A boy, after describing copper as possessing poisonous qualities, and stating that cooking utensils, as well as money, were made of it, was asked what practical lessons he could draw from these circumstances, and replied, ‘That no person should put halfpence in his mouth; and that people should take care to keep clean pans and kettles.’ A lady’s parasol and a gentleman’s watch were described in the same manner. The ivory knob, the brass crampet, the hambo, the whalebone, the silk, were no sooner adverted to, than they were scientifically described. When their attention was called to the seals of a gentleman’s watch, they immediately said, ‘These are of pure, and those of jeweller’s gold,’ and described the difference. The steel ring was traced to the iron-stone in the mine, with a description of the mode of separating the metal from its combinations. The processes requisite for the preparation of wrought-iron from the cast-iron, and of steel from the wrought-iron, with the distinguishing properties of each of these metals, were accurately described, and some practical lessons drawn from these properties, such as, that a knife ought never to be put into the fire, and that a razor should be dipped in warm water previous to its being used. Various articles were collected from individuals in the meeting, and successively presented to them, all of which they described. India-rubber, cork, sponge, pocket-combs, &c. A small pocket thermometer, with its tube and its mercury, its principles and use, and even the Turkey-leather on the cover, were all fully described. After explaining the nature and properties of coal-gas, one of the boys stated to the meeting, that since the commencement of this experiment, he had himself attempted, and succeeded in making gas-light, by means of a tobacco-pipe; his method of doing which he also described.

“At the close of this examination, the chairman and several of the gentlemen present, expressed warmly and decidedly their opinion, as to the entire success of the experiment, and declared that they were indeed quite astonished, that this system had, in so short a period, imparted to the children such an extraordinary store of knowledge; and that they were fully prepared to state this to the public.”—[This report is signed by the gentlemen mentioned above.]

We have thought that a single detailed account like this, would be more satisfactory than detached portions from several different reports. An experiment similar to the one just described, was tried by Mr. Gall in London, in May, 1829, under the supervision of a committee of the Sunday School Union. We copy a paragraph from the report of this committee, which brings into view a point not mentioned in the extract already given. The class here mentioned consisted of three of the most intelligent girls of the school to which they belonged, (of the ages of 11, 12,

and 16, respectively,) and they had been instructed by Mr. Gall for half an hour on thirteen successive evenings.

“The third class was next examined on the nature and practice of *prayer*. They showed great skill in comprehending and defining the several component parts of prayer; as invocation, adoration, confession, thanksgiving, petition, &c. They first gave examples of each separately; and then, with great facility, made selections from each division in its order, which they gave consecutively; showing, that they had acquired with ease and aptitude, by means of this classification, a most desirable scriptural directory in the important duty of prayer. They then turned several lessons and passages of Scripture into prayer; and the Chairman and several of the gentlemen present, read to them passages from various parts of the Bible, which they readily classified, as taught in the “Questions on Prayer,” and turned them into adoration, petition, confession, or thanksgiving, according to their nature. Some of the texts were of a mixed, and even of a complicated nature; but in every case, even when they were not previously acquainted with the passages, they divided them into parts, and referred each of these to its proper class, as in the more simple and unique verses.”

We cannot forbear to state that at the public meeting which was held in London, to communicate the result of the experiment just mentioned, a blind man was introduced, who, though born blind, by means of an alphabet invented by Mr. Gall, was able to read by the touch slowly, but correctly, in the first book printed for the use of the blind. He had acquired the art of reading by only one hour and a quarter's teaching, together with his own practice during a fortnight. He also wrote before the meeting, by means of an apparatus invented by Mr. Gall for that purpose, and numerous specimens of his writing, which he read by his fingers, with great ease, were distributed among the individuals present. He had been taught to write in the space of one hour, and his own practice for a single day had done all the rest. We mention this circumstance in the hope that it may be useful to some in our own country who are suffering under this distressing privation.

As to the facts which we have quoted concerning the Lesson System, they speak a language too plain to be misunderstood, and too impressive to be forgotten.