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- ART. I.—1. *Report from Select Committee on the State of Education, with the minutes of Evidence and Index.* August, 1834. pp. 257, folio.
2. *Report from the Select Committee on Education in England and Wales, together with the minutes of Evidence, &c.* August, 1835. pp. 237, folio.
3. *Report from the Select Committee on Education of the poorer classes in England and Wales, with minutes of Evidence, &c.* August 1838. pp. 171, folio.
4. *A Letter to the Most Noble the Marquis of Lansdowne on National Education.* By Robert Isaac Wilberforce. pp. 65, 18mo.
5. *Second Letter from same to same.* pp. 73, 18mo.
6. *National Education, the Question of Questions, &c. &c., with brief notes on Lord Brougham's bill.* By Henry Dunn. pp. 48, 8vo.
7. *Speech of Rev. Francis Close at Freemason's Tavern, February 9, 1839. With a reply, strictures, &c.* [Several Pamphlets.]
8. *The Mission of the Educator, an appeal for the Education of all classes in England.* pp. 64, 8vo.
9. *Lectures on National Education.* By W. I. Fox. pp. 80, 8vo.
10. *National Education: ought it to be based upon Religion?* A Sermon preached at Bridport, February 24, 1839. By Philip Harword.

awakening of heavenly themes, to find that truth may possess the soul more strongly than fiction; that the glories of humanity are imaginary, until the gospel be embraced; and that all the amusements, nay, all the trade and politics and warfare of the world, are trifles, when compared with the work of God in bringing back the nations to himself.

Amidst the disheartening moral evils which prevail, and the irruptions of false science and corrupt literature, which wound the church on every side, it is our privilege to go about Christian labour under the enthusiasm of a lofty hope, derived from prophecy; for we know the time is coming, when truth shall drive out error; when the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold, as the light of seven days, in the day that Jehovah bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.

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ART. V.—*The Thirty-eighth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society.* 1842. pp. 252. London.

ONE cannot turn over the leaves of this large pamphlet without gratification at the extensiveness, and apparent efficiency of the means now in operation for the diffusion of the scriptures in all languages. The annual reports of this institution, in addition to the details of its own operations, furnish notices of the transactions of the principal societies of the same kind in all countries; so that we may view at a glance the whole system of translating, printing and circulating the holy volume. According to the compendious tables annexed to the Report, there are three Bible societies in Western Europe, six in Northern Europe, thirty-one in Central Europe, twelve in Switzerland and Italy, one in Greece and Turkey, two in Russia, five in India, and two in the United States, the American and Philadelphia. This enumeration is intended to include only the chief or parent societies. The auxiliaries would add thousands to the list. In the thirty-eight years of the British and Foreign Bible Society's existence it has expended, in all its operations, a sum equal to about fourteen millions of dollars, in our currency. The number of copies of the scrip-

tures which it issued in whole or in part, in all languages, during the same period, was about fourteen millions. The languages and dialects in which the Bible is now found approaches to one hundred and fifty. For the different regions of India alone, there are thirty-four translations provided; eight for Africa; twelve for Polynesia. In most Christian communities there is some provision for the cheap sale or gratuitous bestowment of the Bible, for the benefit of all classes. The editions in our own language which are continually in the course of production are innumerable. The arts have been strained to the utmost to produce the costliest and the cheapest forms. The possession of a copy of the Bible in an indispensable mark of civilization wherever English is the vernacular, and it is cited as the mark of the lowest stage of degradation, when one of our species is found among us who can give no general account of what the holy book contains. Not only are the production and supply of the Bible provided for, but who can calculate the amount of labour that is continually in exercise to promote the reading of it? To make the estimate, we shall have to find the statistics of Christendom in reference to the sermons, lectures, addresses, and exhortations of the ministry; the Sabbath and other schools, Bible classes, and households, where the Bible is systematically studied; and the private reading of the whole Christian world.

But when we compare this extensive knowledge of, and deference to the scriptures, with the evidence of their actual influence upon mankind, we discover a wonderful disproportion. Regarding any community where the Bible is theoretically held to be the supreme law, and looking soberly at its citizens in their various relations, public and private, in their principles of business, in their legislatures, courts of justice, and political assemblies, we shall find in the debates, the arguments, the bargains and the plans, little evidence that the principles of the revealed will of God are practically regarded and authoritatively appealed to, any further than these principles may have been incorporated into established constitutions and laws, or into habits that have grown out of them. If we go into the family circle, how seldom do we find the Bible evidently and avowedly followed as the standard of right and wrong, of the duties of husband and wife, parents and children, master and servant! How much is it regarded as of authority in the attention that is given by municipal provision, or private

charity, to the poor, the stranger, the widow and orphan? It must, we think, be admitted by Christians that both as it respects their own "conversation," and the general conduct of the Bible-believing world—making all due allowance, too, for human infirmity and imperfect grace—there is a sad disproportion between the light and the practice.

In looking for a solution of the fact, we have no doubt that a fair investigation will bring us to the result that it is not to the want of Bibles, nor to the neglect of reading them, so much as to the method of using them, that the evil is attributable. We should start in this search with the principle that the scriptures must be familiarly and constantly studied, in order to produce their proper influence on human conduct; the kind of study which was indicated by the divine authority when the moral law was formally announced. "These words which I command thee day shall be in thy heart, [or, as subsequently recited, 'shall ye lay up in your heart and in your soul,'] and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up; and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes: and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house and on thy gates." It is true there was a peculiar necessity for this method of diffusing and transmitting a knowledge of the divine will, when there was no adequate mechanical power for multiplying copies of the law; and the small bulk of the scriptures at that period rendered such a method as that just quoted, of comparatively easy practice. But the principle itself is founded in human nature, and is universal. It is not what we formally and scholastically learn that becomes incorporated into our very frame, but rather what we imbibe from our earliest associations, imperceptibly but constantly, not only through teaching, but as it is dropped in the house, by the way, at the table; unceremoniously, unintentionally, unconsciously. How do children acquire the opinions of their parents? What is the law of this descent? What is the philosophy of that *caste*, which as a general rule binds families to the same opinions from one generation to another? Does not our experience reply, that we trace these results not to the lessons of school or college, of church or forum, but to the extemporaneous impressions made by sentiments and conduct which took their silent ef-

fect at the fireside, in the walk, through the twilight chat, the nursery tale, and bedside prayer? When we try to recall the origin of our present sentiments, there are few, we apprehend, who can fix the date or the method of their ingrafting in their minds, or who can give any more definite history of them than that they formed the atmosphere of home, and grew with their growth. The preacher or professor may have helped us to our terms, arrangements, and verbal rules; but our philosophy, religion, politics and so forth, are in their substantiality, derived from our familiar, and for the most part, our domestic associations.

To exemplify the operation of this principle in religious instruction, let us suppose a contrast in the method pursued in two different families. In one, we will imagine that the Sabbath is the exclusive time devoted to this purpose. Tasks in the Bible, catechism, and psalm-book are regularly assigned and strictly required, during the intervals of public worship, and the evening is spent by each with his Bible in hand, or one reading for all. Is it not easily seen, that in such a case, although the Bible has been the prominent object at home throughout the whole day, there is danger, in the first place, of its being treated merely as a task-book and of there being nothing worthy of the name of instruction received: and in the second place, that the associations connected with the knowledge thus obtained will make its future revival in the mind an unwelcome effort? Let us further suppose, that after the sabbath is passed, the Bible is shut up in that house for the six successive days, excepting at the reading of the chapter in family worship. The father pursues his business, the mother her housewifery, the children their trades or studies, day after day, until the Lord's day returns. The conversation in the family is of business, of news, of political prospects and domestic affairs. What the parents say to their children relates to their lessons, amusements and other incidental matters; but of the divine precepts they have not spoken all this time as they sat in their house, walked by the way, as they lay down and arose.

Suppose, on the other hand, the case of another family, in the same circumstances as the one just presented, as to rank, intelligence, piety and religious privileges, but where the parents take a different course with their household. They do not neglect to teach their children to read and commit the scriptures, but in doing so they use them emi-

nently as authoritative and practical. They hold up the great use of the word, to be as "the rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy" God. In their domestic government and discipline it is their chief law and guide. Does a child disobey, or otherwise dishonour a parent; does he treat a servant with unkindness or the poor with contempt; is he guilty of falsehood, or in his juvenile way evince anger, jealousy, covetousness, or the germs of any other evil disposition? in such a case the first reference is, not to the command of the parent disobeyed, or to the greatness of the mischief done, but to the spirit of the divine law which has been violated. The requirements of the Bible are so placed before the family, that they learn to regard them—not as abstruse doctrines or Sunday statutes, or as relating only to great crimes, like profaneness, falsehood and theft—but as the rules which bind them every day and hour, in all relations, and which hold them accountable first of all to God, of whose laws their parents are, as to them, the administrators. They find that to do, as well as to believe, is involved in the reception of the divine revelation. Parental example teaches them this. They are accustomed to hear the recognition of a superintending Providence in all the events of life; they have witnessed how their father has directed his course in business by the rules of gospel morals, and been elevated by these holy principles above the artifices, grand or petty, of trade; how he has shunned the sin of debt as well as flagrant dishonesty; how he has learned benevolence, and not parsimony, from the bountifulness of God to him, and has brought all his plans and desires into subordination to the primary duty of consecrating all to Him. The scriptures, in such a family, are treated as if they had a real relation to every day's actions. They are cited, for doctrine, for reproof, for historical example, or in the expression of devout thoughts; not sanctimoniously, nor flippantly, but as if they were received with authority.

In which of these imaginary families will the Bible be most likely to impart a permanent influence? Which approaches nearest to the mode of inculcating divine truth enjoined by the lawgiver himself? Which is most accordant with the very character of the Bible, which makes all our duties, duties to God, whatever creature may be the immediate object of them; which reveals a Deity, not for homage only, like the unliving gods of the heathen, but for

obedience and affection ; which extends its rules to all classes of men, to all their conduct, and to their very thoughts and intents ? This being the character of the revelation, and it alone instructing men in the knowledge of what God is and what he requires, and furnishing the standard by which they are to be judged, it is evident that, in the nature of the case, the Bible must be familiarly studied and used in order to have an effect commensurate with its design. It must be in this sense, the every-day book, the family-book, the school-book ; the book of the legislature, the court, the government ; the book of ruler and subject, master and servant, buyer and seller ; the book of the infant, the child and the man. To confine a book of this authority to one day in seven, or to one sacred place, would be infinitely more absurd than for a parent to limit the exercise of his influence over his family to one day in the week. Or, what would be the state of society if our civil laws were known only as they could be learned from the casual scenes of the public court, in the discussions of the bar, the opinions of judges, and the verdicts of juries ; or even if this knowledge depended on the popular reading of the statute-book ? It is because constant use and application of the law all around them, makes men familiar with it, even without formal instruction, that the justice of the maxim is admitted, that ignorance of it is no excuse to the transgressor.

The necessity of such a familiar use of the scriptures as we have referred to, is evident from their very bulk. Reverting to the inspired example already cited—the method enjoined upon the Israelites—it may be remarked that the advantage which printing gives us over them is counter-balanced, in the respect now alluded to, by the increased size of our volume ; which has swelled from the few chapters particularly comprehended in that injunction—or the four books, if we comprise the whole canon as it then existed—to sixty-six books, and nearly twelve hundred chapters. Now, if to maintain the due recollection of so small a portion demanded such a plan of perpetual familiarity, how much more strongly does the reason apply to us, though we have the whole volume in our hands, seeing that its various lessons, conveyed in history, prophecy, psalmody, proverbs, gospels and epistles, have swelled beyond the capacity of memory and the power of tradition ! To accomplish a single perusal of the whole Bible in one year

requires the reading of more than three chapters daily ; or in the proportion of five chapters every Sabbath, and three on each other day. This, we may remark as we pass, is certainly a small demand on any one's time—not exceeding that which most men give to each day's newspaper—yet have we not reason to dread that an investigation, even among Christians, would not bring their average reading of the scriptures to this point ?

And though it be true that the whole law may be comprehended in one precept—love ; and the whole gospel in another—believe ; yet there is nothing superfluous in the Testaments. All scripture is profitable. Nothing becomes obsolete here. Its history and biography are not mere matters of chronicle—they are given us for our example. Its prophecies, even those long since fulfilled, are the eternal monuments of divine truth and omniscience. Its ancient ritual is an almost indispensable key to the mystery of redemption. However diversified its precepts, illustrations and exhortations, none can be spared. They repay the whole attention of the profoundest students, and their riches are an inexhaustible mine. For notwithstanding the confidence some may have in their own intimate acquaintance with the Bible, and in the supposition that the mass of Christian people are at home in every part of the volume, we apprehend that the deficiency is very palpable. Let the experiment be made with some of the most prominent portions of the book ; such as the different kinds of sacrifice and offering ; the services of the day of atonement—that glorious exposition of imputed sin, vicarious punishment, and complete redemption ; the statutes of the Levitical code in relation to wages, the protection of the deaf and blind, the provision for the poor in harvest, the veneration of the aged, the care of strangers—and the common ignorance will soon be apparent. How meager is the knowledge commonly possessed of the Jewish history contained in the books from Joshua to Esther ! How few could give, at once, the distinctions of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, tell the chronology of the prophets, or characterize their writings ! How often are readers perplexed to fix the part of the volume in which some of their books stand, until they have turned to the old table “Genesis hath chapters” &c. &c. ! How many portions there are of which we have impressions of their most scenic and dramatic incidents—such as the death of Abel, Isaac on the altar of sacrifice, the death of Ananias and



Sapphira—but the dates, connexion, cause or result of which are a blank in our minds! “How many precious texts are there,” says Hervey, “big with most rich truth of Christ, which we cannot comprehend, which we know nothing of; and of those we do know how few do we remember!”

Though the Bible may be much read, it is little studied; in the way which is open to the mass of readers. They seldom compare its parts and phrases, the statements of the evangelists for instance, or the quotations in the New Testament from the Old, or trace an argument through an epistle, without regard to the division of chapter and verse, or seek to know the times and places of the sacred events. Many of our readers would probably be surprised at the result if they should open the New Testament at any page for the purpose of discovering the proportion of passages which are in familiar use, to those which seldom occur in meditation or in citation. Many texts, that are the most familiar, are so detached in common use from their proper connexion, that their scope is often wholly mistaken and their meaning distorted; and large portions are continually read without the least discernment of the chain which binds them together, and without the perception of which they fall into as disconnected a form as a selection of Solomon’s proverbs would be. We might almost venture the assertion that not one person in ten can write down from memory the Lord’s Prayer, and find it accurate when compared with either of the forms in the evangelists. To the restricted use of the Bible in the pulpit and in our private reading, and the neglect of expository comments and lectures by preachers, much of this effect is attributable. The course now commonly pursued makes certain parts familiar, whilst others are strange; and the repetition of these familiar parts creates an impression that the whole book is known. The directions given to the Jews for the transmission of the divine laws and ordinances by means of oral instruction, familiar conversation, hereditary privileges, and the explanation to their children of the various rites and ceremonies which they witnessed, secured the intended effect in a manner which attested the wisdom that established the plan. Our Lord constantly appealed to the Jews as familiar with all parts of their scriptures. “Have ye not read what David did when he was an hungered”—“have ye not read in the law that how on the Sabbath day the priests in the temple,” &c. “What is

written in the law? how readest thou?"—"thou knowest the commandments"—"as touching the dead, that they rise, have ye not read in the book of Moses." "Have ye not read that he which made them in the beginning made them male and female?"—"ye have heard that it was said by them of old time"—"did ye never read in the scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected?" Such expressions denote our Saviour's assurance, that even in that degenerate age the Jews had not forgotten or neglected to study the inspired word. So his allusions to their contents were as to matters which were perfectly well known to his hearers, such as his various references to the Levitical law, the history of Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah, incidents in the history of David, Jonah, Lot, the queen of Sheba, Elijah and the widow of Sarepta, Elisha and Naaman, Noah, Moses and the Serpent, &c. In like manner he cited the Psalms, and the prophecies of Daniel, Isaiah, and Malachi. With the Jews he could "begin at Moses," and from him and "all the prophets expound unto them in all the scriptures concerning himself," and prove that "all things must be fulfilled," which they knew "were written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the psalms concerning" the Messiah. For it was not only the chief advantage of the Jews that to them were committed the oracles of God, but that they knew his will, and approved the things that were more excellent, being instructed out of the law, and were confident (according to the apostles' testimony) that they were guides, light, and teachers of all others. From incidental circumstances in the evangelists it would seem that the common people, as well as the scribes and priests, were conversant with the details of their holy writings, so that without research or reference they could produce at the moment of discussion, the appropriate passages. The book of the Acts and the Epistles give interesting evidence to the same point, and show that even those, who in common and unprejudiced estimation were "unlearned and ignorant men," were mighty in the scriptures.

And, surely, this is not more than might be reasonably expected to be the case in our Christian communities, where not in every synagogue only, but in every family, copies of the scriptures abound. Were it so, we might hope that we were nearer the time when the word of God shall be regarded as supreme in every household, in all systems of education, in legislation and jurisprudence, and in all go-

vernments. For all these spheres the Bible is adapted; to all of them it is directed; and, until it is admitted to its place, men will fight and enslave; and justify violations of the moral law, under the pretexts of necessity, expediency, national honour and policy; and the training of the young and the rules of society will be more and more worldly.

The objection that familiarity with the scriptures tends to impair their influence, is sometimes heard from intelligent and conscientious sources. But it seems to us that apart from the necessity of the case, as presented in the preceding considerations, there are two replies which must be conclusive. One is, that the Divine wisdom has sanctioned a method which requires the utmost familiarity, not only with the law, but the mode of instilling it. The revelation was not to be communicated only to the minds that could fully understand and appreciate its subjects, but it was to be made known to the children. The privilege of instructing these was not confined to the hierarchy, but the people themselves were diligently to teach their families. Nor was it only at set seasons, and in a formal manner that this instruction was to be conveyed. It was to be "talked of" at home as opportunity was opened, upon rising in the morning, or retiring at night; or as the parents walked abroad with their children; and so common must the Divine precepts be made, that they should be, as it were, bound upon the hand, fixed between the eyes, and inscribed upon the very posts and gates of the dwelling.

The other reply to the objection in view is that it is contradicted by analogy. Does familiarity beget indifference in the minds of those who are most thoroughly conversant with the elements of the professions, sciences, or other pursuits in which they excel? Is it not superficial knowledge that creates distaste? Is it not the mere smatterer who becomes weary, and that because his mind does not advance far enough beyond the elements to derive any true benefit from them? This is the secret of the facts upon which the opinion is built that the Bible may become too familiar. One knows the story of Joseph, of Samson and Daniel, the sermon on the mount, and the common passages of these kinds, and concludes that he has exhausted the volume. Yet most probably, this same one could not tell the scope, connexion, or argument of any one of the epistles, or repeat five verses of any given page of the New Testament after the book of the Acts. Let us open the works of those who

have been at once the most profound and most devout students of the scriptures—even such as, like Jerome, have intelligently committed the whole scriptures to memory—and see whether their relish for the holy truth was impaired, or whether their familiarity with it made them but dull reciters of the text. Our objectors must think meanly of the taste of the good martyr Ridley when he said, “the walls and trees of my orchard, could they speak, would bear witness, that there I learned by heart almost all the epistles; of which study, although in time a greater part was lost, yet the sweet savour thereof, I trust I shall carry with me to heaven.” David’s habits, in reference to the scriptures, disclose the true way of attaining an unwearied attachment to them, “Oh how love I thy law! *it is my meditation all the day.*”

It is on the ground we are now reviewing, that the Bible is commonly objected to, as improper for the use of schools. But it could easily be demonstrated by a visit to almost any public school, that the alleged distaste has not been the result of too perfect an acquaintance with the contents of the Bible, but of the mode in which it has been used. The unfavourable effect will be found to be attributable to causes much more latent, such as the want of judgment in adapting the portions read to the age and condition of the scholars; the irreverent manner in which the holy book is turned into an exercise for reading or the memory; in making it a mere task, without an effort to render it intelligible by explanations and illustrations; and neglect to treat the Bible in all methods as the practical rule of the learners’ duty in every moment of life, the standard of their character, the foundation of their responsibility, and the law by which they are to be judged. It is the practical degradation of the sacred volume by the teachers of youth, that brings it into contempt—not the intelligent intimacy of the pupils with its contents. There is a kind of familiarity which will degrade any subject, and destroy any authority. It may be allowed by a parent to the destruction of filial reverence; it may be permitted in sacred things until the very table of the Lord may become a place of carousal; and so an ignorant use of the first models of eloquence and poetry, may degrade them in the associations of the youthful mind. In all these instances there is flagrant abuse. Let the Bible be abused in similar ways and the same effects will follow; but when this effect occurs, let the blame lie on those who are guilty of the perversion.