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*Publick Education, particularly in the*  
**CHARITY-SCHOOLS.**

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A  
**S E R M O N**

Preach'd at

St. *Philip's* Church in BIRMINGHAM,

*August 9, 1724.*

At the Opening of a

**CHARITY-SCHOOL,**

Built to receive an Hundred Children;

W H I C H

Are there not only to be taught and cloath'd,  
 but also fed and lodg'd: With Accommoda-  
 tions for a Master and Mistres's.

---

By *THO. BISSE*, D. D.

---

*Published at the Request of the Trustees.*

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L O N D O N:

Printed for W. and J. INNYS at the West End  
 of St. *Paul's*. 1725.

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To the Reverend

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The C L E R G Y, and  
G E N T L E M E N,

T H E

TRUSTEES;

T H I S

S E R M O N,

Preached and Published at their Request,

I S,

With due Respects,

Presented by

Their humble Servant,

894412

Tho. Bisse.

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PSALM CXLIV. 12.

*That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth, that our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace.*

Or in the old translation;

*That our sons may grow up as the young plants, and that our daughters may be as the polished corners of the temple.*



THESE words begin the prayer of the royal Psalmist for the happy estate of his people, as containing the greatest of national blessings, which therefore is put before o-

ther publick blessings, *before all manner of flore*; before the multitude of their flocks, and strength of their cattle, that are prayed for in the following verses. For happy are the people, where the rising generation of

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sons and daughters are well train'd up and polish'd by education: Far happier are the people that are in such a case, than if their folds abounded with *ten thousands of sheep*, or their stalls with *oxen* that were *strong to labour*. And though happier still is that nation, where all these publick blessings meet together; yet *blessed* rather are *that people*, *who have the Lord for their God*, the fountain and giver of them all.

Now this being a national blessing here pray'd for, I must observe, that there are original differences in whole nations as in single persons, one \* people as well as person differing from another, by a superiority of genius, or natural understanding. And should we put that question to any people, *who made thee to differ from another?* Doubtless the answer should be, he that made them. But the far greatest differences, whether in persons or people, is education; which engrafting upon what God hath planted, causes them by improvement to differ more from themselves, than by nature they did from one another.

For first as to persons; whence comes it, that among children born of the same parents, one should raise himself to the degree of noble, while the rest remain in the low level of their birth: That among branches rising from

\* So Cicerò affirms of the Italians. *Ingenia verò (ut multis causis possumus judicare) nostrorum hominum multum cæteris hominibus omnium gentium præstiterunt, Lib. i. de Oratore.*

the same stock, one should grow up into a great tree, insomuch that all the family or dependents lodge under his shadow, whilst the others continue as dwarfs or shrubs? This difference must arise chiefly from outward improvement, since all partake of the fatness of the same natural root: Though whilst I thus speak, I presuppose in all cases the concurrence of the divine blessing, *which gives* <sup>r Cor. i</sup> *the increase.* <sub>6.</sub> If we look into the great posts or offices in the world, they are generally filled by those, whom providence hath raised through the means of their own attainments. prelates in the church, governours in the state, presidents at the bar, rulers in the city, and commanders in the field, are all made, not born such. 'Tis education, not extraction, that creates these differences and degrees among men. Insomuch that he who is born in a palace, shall oftentimes be subject to him that came from a cottage: And unless the children of the mighty, the rich and the noble will take like pains with the offspring of the lower ranks to get knowledge, and to add improvement to their quality, they must be content to be followers of the wise, whencesoever they became wise: For just and necessary it is, that men of knowledge should be governours to the ignorant, as that those who have eyes should be guides to the blind.

Thus by the excellency of education are persons raised, and by persons families; and

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by the neglect of it both persons and families gradually sink in their dignity. And whilst they behold worthier than themselves to come up daily from among the people, they must *with shame take the lower room* in the situation of the world. This ascent and descent of persons, this rising and falling of families, thro' the force or defect of education, is a truth so obvious, that all must observe it; so common, that too many experience it. For this is one way, and I believe the most general way, whereby God visits the iniquities of fathers upon their children, those wicked fathers neglecting the education of their children, being willing they should be even such as themselves; whereby the children of course growing vicious, ignorant and so contemptible, it comes to pass, that the name of the family is *in the next generation clean put out*.

But to extend this observation, as our Text requires, from persons to a people, and to shew the force or want of education upon nations; do we of this nation, abounding in wisdom of government, in all arts and knowledge of workmanship, pity those poor *Indians*, which remain yet ignorant and uncultivated, destitute of all these? We do well to pity them, and we should do better to instruct them; remembering, that we our selves were once the same objects of pity and cultivation to the *Romans*, as the *Indians* are now to us; and thus were the *Romans* themselves

selves to the nations before them. Such is the energy or excellency of knowledge and learning, that it gives not only a difference between one kingdom and another people, but so vast an one, that it may be said to give being and a name to a nation. For as in the scriptural account the knowledge of Religion made them, which *were not a people, to become the people of God*; so the knowledge of arts and sciences may as justly be said to make them which were not a nation, to become worthy of that title, and to be enrolled among the nations of the earth. We may observe farther, that God deals with nations in the same manner with regard to human learning, as to the Christian Religion. For as he takes away the light of the Gospel, so doth he that of knowledge; and giveth both to a *nation bringing forth the fruits thereof*. This too he doth at the same time; for they seem inseparable. Of this many signal and sad examples may be seen in the annals of the Christian world.

Now tho' it becomes us to look upon this as judicial in the intention of God, yet since it pleases him to bring about his judgments generally by natural means, we may trace this up to the same original causes, which are the plentiful provision or gross neglect of publick institution in a land. For how can the Church of God, his pleasant vineyard, be propagated and supplied, but from nurseries ordained thereunto? Or whence can the  
knowledge

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knowledge of sciences, and arts, or any kind of learning, most of which are subservient to Religion, spread in any country, but from seminaries for such learning? Was it not for this, that the apostate Emperor or imperial Antichrist, in order to destroy the Christian name, forbid the Christians the use of schools or any learned institution? Is it not for this, that the great *Mahometan*, enemy to the same name, suffers no academies, no schools, no science, no professors, throughout his vast empire; which therefore deserves not the name of an empire, being in its nature but a mere savage tyranny over great heaps or rather herds of vassals? Wherefore in all Christian states, that have not been afflicted with such destructive princes, with a *Julian* or a *Mahomet*, as there have been seminaries instituted for human learning as well as Religion; Schools of Philosophers as well as of the Prophets, indeed of the former chiefly for the use and in subservience to the latter; so in proportion to the number and œconomy of both, hath that state made a figure in the world. Upon this account our kingdom is not the least in glory, if in extent, among the nations of Christendom.

And here I take this occasion (and just occasion will I omit none) to mention our two great Seminaries famous throughout the world, and to which the world hath shewn nothing parallel, our UNIVERSITIES. But lest we might seem to boast our selves of our own Country;

Country, omitting that cloud of witnesses which I could summon in from abroad, I will only mention the testimony of that renowned foreigner, *Erasmus*, a man that had travelled thro' all parts of the learned world, and was the learnedest man in it; who \* coming into *England*, when he considered what difference there was between the Bishops of this and of other nations, published to the world, that † ONLY ENGLAND HAD LEARNED BISHOPS. Let this testimony be enrolled and stand upon record for ever to the renown of *England* and of our Universities, out of which alone those learned Bishops did or could arise. And tho' those great men were superior to their foreign cotemporaries, yet their successors, sprung from the same nurseries, may without partiality be declared not inferior to them. As the former were the authors, so these have been the champions ever since, of the *Reformation*. There neither is nor can be any just fear from *Rome*, nor all its artful emissaries, nor from the confederate host of hereticks, tho' fighting under such various and false colours; whilst these Universities, productive of so many and so learned antagonists, remain. For these are the fortresses of Truth, *and are like the tower* Cant.  
*of David builded for an armoury, whereon* †  
*there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields*  
*of mighty men.*

\* Upon the invitation of Archbishop Warham.

† Antiq. Brit. p. 306.

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But I confess that these Nurseries, tho' of a superior kind, are not of universal extent. In these indeed our sons grow up to be sons of wisdom: but then they commonly are, or ought to be, the sons of the middle or upper ranks, which are here train'd up to fill the greater professions and offices in Church and State.

But besides these large Seminaries, our nation is blessed, probably above any other nation, with a multitude of subordinate SCHOOLS planted throughout the land. Among these there are some few of greater extent and eminence, which are founded to be direct nurseries to their correspondent COLLEGES; and happy would it be, were there more correlatives of that kind. These may be said to be of a richer soil, and are oftentimes the raisers of our greatest men; which I speak only in justice to these, not to the diminution of schools of an inferior or different institution.

Many of these were erected or re-established at the *Reformation*, many since that blessed *era* of our annals. In conjunction with and as a suppliment to these, many laudable schools are undertaken by the voluntary and very beneficial industry of our Clergy; beneficial not so much to themselves but to the nation: for without doubt every good master is a publick benefactor.

Now these, whether established or voluntary, are of necessary use. For these are  
1
nurseries



nurseries for our sons to begin their education in, and to take root as young plants, till they are grown up to that strength and stature, as to be removed or transplanted into those larger seminaries, the *Universities*; or to turn off thro' a lower tract to the more mysterious vocations, crafts or occupations; which under innumerable names and forms were invented and ordained to supply the several necessities of mankind, and to demonstrate and promote that mutual dependence of every rank and profession upon each other, so that no one can say to another, *I have no need of thee.*

Yet all these, tho' so numerous and proportioned to their design, did not extend their usefulness to the exigencies of the poor. There were wanting in our land still some methods and ways of education, where the numerous off-spring of the poorer sort might come and receive instruction *without money and without price*; such instruction as might render them both good Christians and useful persons in the lower callings of the world; such moreover, as extended to both sexes, whereby not only the *sons might grow up as the young plants*, but also *the daughters might be as the polished corners of the temple.*

And in these Nurseries our nation has the glory not only of excelling, but of leading the way, by beginning and setting up of CHARITY-SCHOOLS, which now abound every where, gathering up the fatherless and needy, which

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which indeed do more abound. Into these schools are such likewise received as young plants, imbibing the principles of knowledge and goodness, which without this nurture would otherwise run wild, and overspread the land with a stupid or wicked generation.

That I may encourage you, the beginners and promoters of this eminent Nursery, to persevere in this labour of love, I shall endeavour to set forth the usefulness of this education, and that First with regard to the children, Secondly to the publick. Afterwards I shall answer the chief objections raised against it; that as your zeal may not be damp'd in carrying on this charitable work, so ye may also have wherewithal to put to silence the gainsayings of unreasonable men. Lastly, I shall close the whole with an exhortation.

Now among the many advantages of this education with respect to the children, the first I shall mention, is

I. The teaching them to READ; a faculty, which is of a thousand advantages in life, but in religion is little less than necessary. For what advantageth it a man, that the Scriptures are translated into his mother-tongue, when, tho' they lie open before his eyes, writ in the only tongue he speaks, yet they are in effect the same to him, if he cannot read, as if they were still sealed up in their learned originals? When such an one comes into the house of God to worship there, what little difference is there between himself  
who

who readeth not, and the blind man who seeth not? They are both alike shut out from using the Liturgy, and thereby in many places from the comfort and decency of joining with the congregation.

Again, when such an one is obliged, as all are obliged at least thrice in the year, to appear at the Lord's Table, how and with what difficulty do we prepare him? That variety of offices or books preparatory to the holy Communion, which are thought useful to the most knowing, are all lost to this unskilful person, who needs them most. And when he comes to the holy Table, whilst the Communicants join, as they are obliged, in the Confession, hymns and responses, he like the man in the marriage-feast, is commonly speechless; not indeed on the like account of impurity, but mere incapacity to read, and so acquaint himself with the office. I speak not this to discourage the approach even of such to this blessed Sacrament, which the Church so strictly enjoins as necessary to the souls of Christians; remembering that that feast was filled by those gathered from *the hedges and highways*, not from the scenes of business or pleasures; and that at his table *the Lord may fill the hungry with good things, whilst the rich he sends empty away*. No: I speak it only to this intent, that seeing this is the high mystery of the Christian religion, to which our Church (warn'd by the *Corinthian*) directs her members to come with the preparation

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paration of knowledge as well as of repentance, lest through ignorance they should not *discern the Lord's body*, as well as defile it by impenitence; that therefore the more knowing among us may the more zealously encourage these Schools, which lay this groundwork of reading in the poorer sort; through which alone the Church can, by teaching them the Catechism, and thence bringing them on to Confirmation, fit and prepare them by degrees for this blessed ordinance, and thereby prevent that ignorance, which is too often found, at least fear'd, in our common people concerning that holy mystery, and which if not amended, might among other causes *provoke the Lord to jealousy* against this Church.

Though I instance in these essential duties of Christianity, yet reading is as necessary to all kinds of instruction; as particularly reading is necessary to the faculty of WRITING, which is a second and very useful part of this education. Now if a man cannot read, how shall he be taught to write? Yet what an helpless person must he be, I say, not to others, but to himself, who in every little affair must borrow an hand to write, or an eye to read, what is written? Should I recount the inconveniencies that surround a person void of these talents, *viz.* reading and writing, so useful to common life, I might as well describe the miseries that attend the blind, who grope for the wall at noon-day,  
being

being forced in difficulties to borrow the hand of a child, or the guidance of a brute beast.

I might here pass on to enlarge on the great usefulness of writing, and likewise of ACCOUNTING, which, after the groundwork of reading is laid, is taught in order in these schools; and shew of how great advantages this must prove to the children for the advancement of their fortunes, unto whatever estate of life it shall please God to call them. In the management of some callings it is necessary, in most exceeding useful, and in services highly valuable. For as of old a learned slave was sold at an higher price, so now the knowing servant, skilled in these things, estimates his service in proportion to his knowledge. And 'tis a daily testimony to these schools, that from them an apprentice or servant is sooner chosen and taken off the publick without any consideration, than others totally ignorant are with the customary demand.

But the time will not allow me to insist longer on the manifold usefulness of this education with regard to the children in their future vocations; which if wholly wanting, yet this one thing would abundantly recommend it, that it brings them up in the way of everlasting salvation. For as the Jewish Doctors enjoin'd, that children should be taught a trade, but above all trades the Law; so whatever instruction preparatory to their callings

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be taught here, the knowledge of religion superadded to it, consecrates and crowns the whole. Blessed and ever laudable will be the design of these Schools, in that they are principally ordained, and as it were hallowed, to be the schools of Christ. But for whom or what disciples? For such, as are brought forth in state, and swaddled in purple? No: but for the children only of the poor, for thousands of souls, thousands of thousands of innocents, who without these helps would scarce ever come to *know their right hand from their left*, but must be left in too great, yet sad probability of becoming children of perdition, of being lost for ever. Is not the salvation of these a design acceptable in the eyes of every Christian? Most assuredly it is such in the sight of him, who as he was born in greater humility than the child of the poorest man ever was, so was he born as much for the poor, and the children of the poor, and for their salvation, as of us, or of all the superior orders of men, who indeed with him, that *hath no respect of persons*, are not superior. The meanest, the least of these little ones, though a seeming out-cast of this world, perhaps without father and without mother, yet is not without his angel, above all, not without his Saviour. And the same hath testified, that whoso shall give the least proportion towards the salvation of such an one, *but a cup of cold water*, if because he believes, much more that he may believe

Matth.

xiii. 10.

believe in Christ, verily *shall in no wise lose his reward.* The salvation of souls, of such souls, is charity indeed: And 'tis this design that gives to these nurseries the true and just denomination and signature of CHARITY-SCHOOLS before God and good men.

But besides the personal usefulness of this education to the children themselves, I must hasten to shew,

II. Its great usefulness to the publick, and that both in church and state: And with regard to the state alone, I shall instance but in one important thing, and that is,

I. That it tends to root out by degrees that race of idle vagrant poor, that sore evil and burthen to this nation.

For that sort of them, which are the sore evil, and have hitherto been incurable, are those that are brought up to it by instruction, not made such by misfortunes. For activity being natural in children, laziness found in young beggars must be acquired; it must be learned and taught them. Idleness it self must in youth be got by a sort of industry. Children must take pains to become habitually idle, as well as habitually wicked. That generation therefore of vagrant poor, which swarm in our streets, and infest the land, are not born such, but bred up to it. I will not here enquire into the methods of their wicked education, how they are bred, by what masters of iniquity, or by what lessons they are train'd up to every evil work, to all kinds

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of felony: But since our populous towns and cities, or rather chiefly our great capital, which equals them all, seems to be the main root and receptacle of this race of evil-doers, the center of their retreat and rendezvous; it seem'd providential, that on the other hand that should be the first parent, and greatest promoter of these Schools; which by gathering up, and securing the children of the poor, before they are planted into that bed of weeds, will prevent the growth of any future generation, though they cannot extirpate what is grown.

But as all preventives are slow in operation, the cure of this sore evil is such, as calls loudly for the sharper and present remedy of the law, and whole authority of the magistrate. And doubtless there is some great disconcert and deficiency in the execution of the law, that notwithstanding it hath so often, and by such severe and accumulated penalties, caus'd its *anger to smother* against these vagrants, they should still remain and multiply; that this sad leprosy, for such it is, should still cleave to, and spreading from the head, should over run the whole body of our nation. It is doubtless curable. And this I affirm, that that set of magistrates, which should remove the grievance of these counterfeit poor, would be greater benefactors to the publick, than if they built hospitals sufficient for the real poor. Though Charity plants and propagates these Schools  
to



to its power, yet the extirpation of this evil will be a work too difficult for it, without the concurrence of the magistrate. Besides, it sits too hard upon charity even to supply these nurseries, whilst such multitudes are openly tolerated to take so great a proportion of *the childrens bread*. On the other hand, this work seems also too difficult for the government, without the assistance of these schools. For in vain would that cut off with the sword what is grown up in this wicked way, unless at the same time this education went to the root.

Indeed it not only goes to the root, but corrects the nature of it. Instead of the idle it brings forth the industrious; instead of the ignorant, the understanding; instead of the mischievous, the useful. Besides this, Charity, like the daughter of wisdom, endeavours to finish what it has begun. And therefore after it has led them through this education, leaves them not at random to provide for themselves; but sees them placed out to callings, for which it has fitted them, either as servants or apprentices to the lower trades or occupations.

Providence hath raised, and probably will always raise some out of these nurseries into an high and flourishing condition: And such remarkable \* blessings on particulars, should

\* It would be of great credit and service to the charity, if each school kept a register of such its scholars, that afterwards settled well, particularly that eminently flourish'd in the world.

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be look'd upon as a testimony from above, that with the whole *God is well pleased*. However this charity in letting up such schools, declares not this to be her true original view or intention, being desirous not to disorder, but only better the world, not (as some object) to change the subordination of mankind, by raising these children above their level, into the ranks and trades belonging to their betters; but only to preserve them, so as that they sink not below themselves into the species of beggars and felons, which are not better than brutes and beasts of prey, and so prove below men, a load and pest to mankind. This charity therefore, if rightly understood, is a preserver of order, no wise the author of confusion. For it keeps the lowest order of mankind, *viz.* the poor, in its proper situation, fitting it for its proper office; which like that of the feet, though the lowest of the members, is ordained to support the rest of the body politick: Whereas without this fitness, the order of the poor, like disabled or diseased feet, prove oftentimes a sore burthen, and a pain instead of a support, insomuch that all the members suffer by it and with it. For what a burthen the honest poor are, and what a grievance the wicked, we all feel, and we all lament. These feet then of the publick body do not receive from this education such an unnatural ply or distortion, as to be turn'd up into the place and function, either of the eye to guide, or of the hand

hand to controul; but they continue feet still: whose proper office is to support, and for which this education fits and invigorates them, by making them through an early exercise sound and active.

2. Another signal advantage arising from this education, and rather to be insisted on, is with regard to the Church, and it is this, that it insensibly conveys Religion into the families of the poor.

For these little scholars are no other than teachers in their father's house. The minds of children are athirst for knowledge, which they with impatience draw and catch from one another; the younger being eager to learn, and the elder as ambitious to instruct. Thus the house of the poor man is erected or rather elevated into a school: wherein too the parents themselves by the natural delight they take in this mutual instruction passing between their children, and in hearing and asking them questions, are with equal delight instructed; the grey-headed are without a blush themselves catechised. However where parents need not instruction, yet they reap this comfort from these little ones, that they prove readers to them as well as teachers to their brethren and sisters. Thus from these nurseries Religion is by degrees transplanted into every house, and is, if I may so speak, propagated by these little off-sets.

3. Another equal advantage arising from this education to our Church is this, that it teach-

es these children and thence others, how to behave themselves in the house of God.

For there is a sacred behaviour, that belongs to the Church of God: *this becometh his house for ever.* For this there are ordained *Rubricks* or rules which ought to be more studied by us all, as they are by these children, and learnt in youth, since they are too little understood and less practised in age. Behold then this little order or choir of innocents: behold, how uniform in their gestures, how agreeing in their responses, standing, kneeling, bowing, answering, reading, singing, all at once with exact uniformity; insomuch that I may venture to affirm, that no Congregation even of adult persons, how devout and regular soever, did ever come up to that harmonious exactness, to such an uniform correspondence in worship, as what our eyes have now seen and do daily see in these Assemblies of children.

Now there is a language in their behaviour, an eloquence in their uniformity, that represents our publick Service to better advantage, than the more studied oratory of the Pulpit. For this is a language, that best instructs the ignorant sort, who can understand what decency and order mean, when they behold them with their eyes in the practice of these Children, which do hardly enter into their understandings by the best description of the Preacher. This is an eloquence likewise, that best persuades the wiser sort,

fort, who need herein no instruction. For they cannot but yield their conformity to that, which even in children extorts their admiration. These schools then being distributed into so many Parochial districts, must of course diffuse a like uniformity into those Congregations, whercof they are a part and the most exemplary part: I speak not this at all to your shame, but only to the commendation of such among you, whose pious charity hath been exemplary in forwarding and forming these examples. For their regular behaviour in the Church will be a continued Sermon upon the excellency of our Service, teaching the ignorant and convincing the obstinate, that in it all things are ordered, and may *be done* even by children *decently and in order*. By this education then they become not only of use, but an ornament in our publick worship; and in this aptly resemble *the polished corners of the Temple*.

4. The fourth and last advantage I shall mention arising from these schools, has an equal regard both to Church and state, which is this, that this education tends in the most effectual manner to prevent the growth and return of *Popery* among us, which is counted the greatest enemy to both.

For what method can be so effectual to bring *Popery* again into this nation, as that which kept it up here before the *Reformation*, and which now keeps it up in Popish countries?

tries? Now this is known to be a national ignorance spread over the common people; among whom the very scriptures are locked up, and the publick worship performed *in an unknown tongue*. What better method then can our Church take to bar out Popery, than by opening the eyes of the people; that they may read what is written in the word of God, and understand what they ask in his worship: Highly blameable is this practice of the Papists, in hiding the scriptures and publick service in the Latin language, not understood by the people; in a manner making the grammarian necessary to the Christian. But alas! to people; who cannot read, all books in all languages are alike, alike shut up from their personal use. In direct opposition to this principle of Popery therefore is this education, which by teaching the Children to read and to use the Common-prayer, enables them to look into the Bible, and to join better in our worship, and so both to read and to *pray with the understanding*. Upon this was grounded that pious wisdom of our Reformers, of planting schools every where upon the dissolution of Religious houses, and the planting of these was the repeated and a principal plea for their dissolution; that by these lights that cloud of ignorance might gradually be dispelled, under which superstition had (as there alledged) fate down and sheltered it self amongst us several centuries.

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Since then to breed up the common people in a blind implicit ignorance, and that by shutting them out from reading and thereby the knowledge of the scriptures and of their worship, is the known and distinguishing principle of the Church of *Rome*; and since this education by the opposite methods directly tends to cure and prevent that ignorance in the people of this land; who so therefore among us is a promoter of these schools, the same is an effectual enemy to popery, whether he intends it or not. On the other hand, who so sets himself against them, the same is the most real friend to popery, whether he knows it or not. For why? He distinguishes himself in promoting that very principle, for which popery is distinguish'd, and by which in the declared judgment of our own, and of all protestant Governments, it is most promoted.

Behold then, how unjust that accusation is, formed by some against these schools, namely, that they have a tendency towards *Rome*, that they are so many little Seedplots, in which, unless rooted up, popery will again take root and insensibly grow up amongst us. This is the chief of those objections which I shall proceed to answer. I own that this, with the objections following, being found in fact the reverse to truth, may seem such, and are such, as could never enter into a serious or sensible understanding; and therefore that an answer to them may alike seem to some but  
a for-

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a formal *beating of the air*: But such consider not, that these, like most other objections against truth and goodness, proceed from *the ignorance of foolish men*. And since these are generally made the instruments and mouths of the wiser, to utter and execute their designs; and since these objections have been an hindrance to the beginning of this charity in sundry places, and a bar to its general progress; therefore foolish and unreasonable as they are, they ought to be shewn to be such, and either to be *put to silence* or *shame*.

As to this first, That these schools are distant nurseries and seedplots of popery, tho' I have proved the direct contrary, yet to satisfy your selves as well as such gainsayers, consider the sole subject of religious principles taught in them, which is only the Catechism of our church. This contains a great deal; but then only those necessary things, which every christian, of whatever church, "ought to know and believe to his soul's health". But then it contains these in so brief a method, so far from admitting of things superfluous; that the plea brought for its abrogation was, that it did not contain enough, not even things necessary; in the place whereof a larger catechism was ordered to be substituted; of which this was the event. Whereas the Church-Catechism, a master-work in small, was for the use of children drawn up in a narrow compass; the  
*Assembly's*



*Assembly's* Catechism is rather for the use of men, \* "spread out into a body of divinity". However this advantage must be allow'd to our catechism above the other, that in it there is much less, indeed not the least possible, room for any mixtures of popery, which in its mildest character is all superfluity, and as such, was cutt off from the body of the vine at the reformation. As there is left no room in the subject taught for such infusions, so no liberty in the teacher; whom at the commencement of this charity, for the prevention of such attempts, the Law with the Canon obliged to renounce the papal errors, and authority, by oath as well as subscription.

But after all ye must not be disturbed, nor at all discouraged, if these schools of innocents should be still called feedplots of popery; since I know not by what destiny, or rather sorcery, all nurseries for the church, even the two great blessed seminaries, our Universities, though the chief barriers against it, have from the same quarter suffered all along under that unjust imputation. I will not waste any time in vindicating these also; but will only cite a most remarkable testimony on their behalf, given and published by the *Presbyterian* Divines in the days of the *Usurpation*. Hear their words, where speaking of the then governing Sects, who deny-

\* Hammond.

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ing the divine right of the Priesthood, held, that any gifted man might take upon himself the ministry without ordination or learning, They thus say: † “Certainly if the Lord in  
 “ his wrath should suffer you so far to pre-  
 “ vail, as to suppress learning, and TRAMPLE  
 “ ON THE UNIVERSITIES, that there should  
 “ be no learned men to detect popish impo-  
 “ stures, and refel their errors, that neither  
 “ shield nor spear should be left among thou-  
 “ sands in *Israel*; you would in this more  
 “ advance Antichrist, than if you were his  
 “ sworn vassals, even an army of Friars and  
 “ Jesuits.

Those then that are enemies to these two seminaries, are as sworn friends to popery, the Presbyterians themselves being judges. That the promoters also of these little nurseries are no friends to popery, I appeal unto the same judges; who themselves are so far from condemning the design, that they have set up schools in imitation of ours; and I would to God they would imitate us in all things.

And I should be unjust to them, as well as our selves, should I wilfully decline to repeat and reinforce here that seasonable caution, which those men, in opposing the same adversaries, there gave in general against the

† *In a Book, entitled, The Divine Right of the Gospel-Ministry, in two Parts: Published by the Provincial Assembly of London, 1654. p. 62.*

very word \*POPERY, warning their congregations against it, expressly calling it a great cheat, and a bugbear word. For alas! when they found this word, which they had unhappily used to the destruction of the church and monarchy, prove in the event also destructive of christianity: forasmuch as in those unhappy days, as they there complain, the doctrine of the Soul's Immortality, of the Trinity, of *Christ's* Divinity, of the magistrate's power in punishing of Heresies, of Infant Baptism, &c. were each charged as antichristian or popish; so that, as they go on, "Under the notion  
 " of avoiding antichristianism, there were ma-  
 " ny people tumbling down apace to direct  
 " atheism; and were brought to renounce  
 " *Christ*, lest they should comply with Anti-  
 " christ"; they thus close, "Therefore we  
 " earnestly beseech and intreat our respective  
 " congregations, not to be affrighted at the  
 " BUGBEAR WORD, ANTICHRISTIAN OR POPISH".  
 I may justly add, that if ever that word were such a cheat and a bugbear, it was never more so, than when applied to these unexceptionable nurseries.

The second objection against them is, that they are nurseries also of REBELLION, breeding the children up to be disaffected and disloyal. Whereas this education tends to bar out rebellion, no less than superstition;

\* Part. II. p. 40, 41.

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and that by breeding up an industrious, as well as knowing, generation of the poor.

For who is less disposed for insurrections, the forerunners of plunder and rapine, than the honest industrious man, who having learnt by such an education, accordingly “labours” to get his own living in that estate of life in which he is placed, and *studies also to be quiet*, that he may enjoy what he has got? And who more hearkening after wars, and rumours of wars, than the idle loose drones, or rather wasps of the earth, who having gathered nothing to lose, so have nothing to subsist on, nor skill in any occupation to get a subsistence? From whence are all armies raised and recruited, but from such refuse of youth, who for want of education have been train'd up to nothing; and so unskilled to work, unable to dig, and ashamed to beg, are forced to enlist into the soldiery for a livelyhood? And whether it be in defence or subversion of governments, so they be paid, is to such mercenaries as fight for pay, near a case.

However, our proper answer to this objection is this, that this education prevents, as much as possible, all rebellious notions and dispositions in these children, by breeding them up according to the doctrine and principles of the Church of *England*; which, if any church on earth teaches true loyalty, verily is that church. For it teaches not in these, nor in any other of its nurseries, what  
the

the papists teach in their seminaries, that Kings may be deposed by the Pope; nor what some protestants teach in their academies, that Kings may be deposed by the people. No; our church hath renounced both these tenets of resisting the powers ordained of God, and hath fixed on them, and the teachers of them, what the scripture hath done, the sentence of damnation. If any professed churchmen be at any time involved in rebellion, be they clergy or laity, let them answer for their own follies in their own persons. But what is their crime to these innocents? They themselves would doubtless absolve these, as *David* did his people, saying, *we have sinned and done wickedly, but these lambs, what have they done?* Rom. x  
2.

But if we consult experience as well as principle, alas! rebellions never spring from among the poor. They are not bred in cottages, nor forged in the shops of artificans; but, like thunder in the clouds, are formed in high places. They are conceived and conducted by persons of loftier extraction, capacities and views. Take these heads off by pacification or punishment, the known maxim of governments, and there will be no insurrection or motion in the hands or feet.

Another objection, and probably the most real one, though equally unreasonable, is, that this education tends to bring up these children in a PARTY, by party secretly meaning the interest of the establish'd church,

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which they openly and ignominiously term the Church-party.

This objection, if it may be so called, I own and rejoice, is grounded on fact. For were these children bred up in a contrary interest, as I should think my self obliged to preach instantly against them; so I am persuaded, that all ye who have done so great things for the erecting of this nursery, would this hour set your heart and hand for its immediate suppression; as well knowing our church and monarchy to be bound up in one inseparable interest; and that no men, nor party of men can at any time strike at the Altar, but they must with the same blow shake the Throne; and that whosoever therefore is bred up in any way among us adversaries to the church, can never in the event prove *Cæsar's* friends.

I beg leave just to remark, that as there is no reason in the objection, so no sense in that expression or appellation of CHURCH-PARTY. For can the establishment be called a party? or the whole a part? Not but party is so far from being a part, much less the whole, of our ecclesiastical establishment; that on the contrary, it is in its essence a separation from, and an offence to it. And if it be ever suffered to join itself, or seemingly to grow to the body, it is to be looked upon not as a constituent part or limb, but only as an imposthumation or excrescence; which are attended generally with danger, always with deformity. Such, no better is party:

party: And however by some it may be called or countenanced, yet the church detests the thing, as well as disdains, or rather derides the name; even as its partner, the state hath ever done; which though yielding the right hand to the church in the form of our constitution, yet never submitted to the like absurd and mock-appellation of STATE-PARTY.

Now if this education brings up so many subjects in the interest of the church, and consequently of the state, which is one and indivisible, it greatly conduces to the soundness and symmetry of our whole establishment, by an early prevention of party, which (as I said) so greatly distempers and deforms it. That it hath, and will have daily this effect on our people, is what we own with thankfulness before God and the world. The thing indeed plainly speaks itself. For *as the arrows are in the hand of a giant, so are the young children in the possession of any society.* *Happy is our daughter of Sion, who hath her quiver so full of these arrows: she shall not be ashamed when she speaketh with her enemies, of whatever denomination, in the gate.*

PG. 1:  
N. 4.

Yet in this truth, as I hinted, surely lies the secret core of the chief dissatisfaction and displeasure against these schools, which under such popular pretences, forms and foments these objections against them; which objections, if well observed, are originally against

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the church, and only consequentially against these nurseries; condemning the publick method, authorized by the church, and enjoined to schools, of bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, “by instructing them in the Church-Catechism set forth for that purpose”. Whence the same condemnation holds as much against the education of us, and of all the superior, as of these lower ranks; which, as to the principles of religion set forth in the Catechism, is or ought to be the same in all; if in any it be another, it is a worse. Wherefore it behoves us to clear these schools of those imputations, or we condemn our own families.

But besides all these (which might indeed be expected opponents to these Schools, whilst such to the church) alas! there are some enemies to them from an higher malignity; not because they breed up these little ones to be churchmen, but even christians. As in the martyrdom of the Innocents, tho’ too under publick pretences, the destruction of *Christ* was intended; so in the condemnation of these nurseries, *Christ’s* holy religion, and therein himself, is so far struck at. Because these children are bred up in the knowledge and worship of *Christ* their Lord, God blessed for ever; because they are daily heard in the church to confess his Godhead in the creeds, and to praise him in their hymns, therefore there are some among our people *sore displeas’d*, as there were among  
the



the Jews, when they heard the children Mat. x  
*crying in the temple, Hosanna to the son of* 5.  
*David.* But what said our Lord to the re-  
 provers of those children: Even the same he  
 saith to the accusers of them now. *Have ye*  
*never read? Out of the mouths of babes and*  
*sucklings thou hast ordained strength.* Pf. viii The  
 reason for his ordaining it then, holds good in  
 this age, *because of his enemies*, to get him-  
 self glory on them by such multitudes of in-  
 fants; it seeming good to him from the be-  
 ginning, thus by the innocent to *still the*  
*avenger*, by the irrational the disputer, by  
 the impotent the mighty.

Having finished the heads I proposed, I  
 come to apply the whole with an exhortation.

Hitherto the propagation and support of  
 these schools have been the work of private  
 hands; whereas our other seminaries have in  
 their beginnings been the care and cultivation  
 of the publick. Our Universities in their in-  
 fancy had Kings for their nursing-fathers, by  
 whom they were established by charters, and  
 encouraged with privileges worthy their in-  
 stitution. Most of our *Free-Schools* were  
 founded and endowed by the piety of our  
 princes: And in all Governments, \* *popish*  
 or *protestant*, have not only been confirmed  
 and protected from sale, but exempted from  
 burthens, even from the † *subsidies* of the

\* 2 Ph. & M. c. 8. §. 5. † 5. Eliz c. 24. §. 20.

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clergy, as well as taxes of the laity. Nay, under the worst of governments, or rather no government, when the church and its dignities, with all other dependencies on its revenue, were delivered up to sale and sacrilege, these were \* exempted, and as by miracle were not *destroyed of the destroyer*. These charity-schools have now passed through their years of probation, and that strict enough, and may seem to deserve some publick favour or attestation.

I have shewn them to be preventive of the greatest evils incident to our Constitution, Popery, rebellion and party, and on the other hand productive of much signal publick good. But this is too narrow a view of their influence. For the lower ranks being a great division, if not majority of our people, this plentiful provision for the education of their off-spring must gradually spread through the whole land a national goodness. By these lesser schools placed in subordination to the greater, it will in a few years come to pass, that *all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest*. And 'tis this alone that must effect what has been the aim of all wise governments and long ambition of ours, to make us to become a great people. How? By laying the foundation of our greatness in goodness. For true it is of nations as of persons, that none can be called truly great, but what are good.

\* Scobell's *C 12 Elions* 1650. 23.

Neither are they great in might, any more than merit. What think we, that our armies, fleets or alliances, are true foundations of our national might? These are great and necessary defences; but then extrinsecal, of no better service to a wicked nation, which put their whole trust in them in contempt of religion, than the vast armour was to the uncircumcised Philistine, who confided in it, defying the living God. We happily possess all these; but God may turn them likewise into an incumbrance and a spoil, unless we by our goodness procure him to be for us. Great in might is that nation only, which hath the Omnipotent for an ally: yea invincible is that government who hath the Lord for its God. In this undoubtedly true, though unusual, estimate of Kingdoms, as the stripling of *Jesse* wrought a greater defence for *Saul* and his people, than the whole army of *Israel*; so I look upon an hundred of these innocents planted up and down in our towns and cities, to be as sure a guard to our *Israel*, as ten hundred of armed men placed there; and that our *Jerusalem*, with the tower of *David*, is better secured, might I not say garrison'd? by the numerous Charity-Schools within its walls, than if those walls were filled with as many towers and those towers with legions.

Now a national goodness, the only true foundation of our greatness, in that it induces God to be our ally and our glory, must come up as from seed: it must be propagated

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in all our youth from the lowest to the highest, and be nursed up in schools or seminaries proportion'd to their multitudes spread through all our coasts. For as to our government, the wisdom whereof consists in the due administration of its laws, it can pretend to no such effect or influence on the land. For the laws being *made not for the righteous, but lawless and disobedient*; the execution of them tends directly to suppress vice, not to produce virtue. At the best, as the wise \* *Bacon* remarks, "good governments may nourish virtue grown, but do not much mend the "feeds". And even as to wickedness, they suppress it when grown up into an offence, but do not root up the weeds. No; the extirpation of these and propagation of the other, which must both concur to bring forth a national goodness, can be expected chiefly from the cultivation of seminaries, not the administration of governments. Only as all wise and good governments have ever taken care of their seminaries, to fence them in by protection, and forward them by encouragement; so our Government, 'tis probable, may hereafter find some proper occasion to express their publick goodwill and favourable declaration towards these schools; which would be a better answer and defence against all their opponents, as well as encouragement to their promoters, than the many

thousand apologies or exhortations uttered from the Pulpit.

But resigning this blessing to the good pleasure of him who is the Ruler of Rulers, let us in our private capacities proceed in this labour of love towards these most real objects of it, that fall within our several divisions. Ye of this place have indeed gone far in this acceptable work, even to have laid a precedent. The convenient habitation ye have provided for so many children, and that not only for their instruction but entire maintenance, which indeed crowns the whole design, testifies to the world the wisdom as well as zeal of your charity, and may well deserve and perhaps draw on an imitation from places of equal opulency. Doubt ye not therefore, but that God accepts this charitable work of yours, in bringing up so many children in his holy ways. This school ye have built for them verily will bring a blessing into your houses, which will rest in particular upon your children, and in general *upon all ye shall put your hand unto.*

I ought to observe for your encouragement, that God seems to have already blessed this Place for its peculiar industry, beyond the measure and manner of his ordinary blessings on cities or towns, in that it has spread it self into such an extent of populacy and traffick without the natural advantages of a navigable river, or the legal encouragements of franchises or a Charter: nay that ye should  
enjoy

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enjoy these in so general agreement, without the superintendence of the Magistrate or awe of justice, which are found so necessary for the tranquillity of a less numerous body of people. So that the two great blessings, rather prayed for than enjoyed by *Jerusalem*, are possessed by this place; that there is *peace within its walls, and plenteousness within its dwellings*, without the usual visible causes of them, which ye ought therefore to acknowledge as invisible, as coming from above. And if these be conferred on you as a reward and encouragement of your industry; surely the erecting of such a receptacle for the education and maintenance of the poor, added to this † noble Sanctuary, wherein we stand, built for the honour of Gods holy name and worship, these testimonies of your piety and charity thus united, will more and more consecrate your industry, will daily *multiply the works of your hands upon you, and prosper all your handy work.*

In this assurance proceed ye to establish what ye have so far advanced, with courage and cheerfulness. Let each upon this joyful solemnity bring forth his tribute before the Lord; and let him know, that what he gives in this holy place is accepted, not as a vulgar alms given in the street, but as an offering laid on God's Altar. *They that have much, let them give plenteously: they that have*

† *A New compleat and capacious Fabrick, built by Mr. Archer.*  
*little,*

*little, the widow, the stranger, the servant and the hireling, let these do their diligence to give of that little.* But whatever they give, let it be done with a willing mind, which alone gives it acceptance. To move you to *open your hand wide* unto this most acceptable work, let me close with this observation how apt men are with a liberal, yea lavish hand, daily to sow upon the furrows of unrighteousness.

Vanity is an expensive thing, but vice much more so. As to vanity, the superfluities of living, used among the great and the rich, which are daily spent without observation or thanks, what a noble figure would they make in charity? So cheap and yet so showish, a thing is charity, that the very refuse of mens vanities would in this way make an handsome appearance. For instance: any trifle, if retrench'd in our apparel, would cloath one of these little ones; if in our table, would feed many of them; if in our diversions, would cause a multitude of them to sing for joy.

If this may be said of vanity, how much more of vice? That which is daily wasted in scandal and obscurity among the haunts of debauchery, how would it shine in a school for these children, or in an hospital for the aged? That which is vilely cast away into these polluted sinks, would make the conduit of charity to overflow. Alas! Vice, like all other monsters, is an insatiable devourer:  
and

and what is worse, it is encouraged to be so. It is oftentimes bid to ask (like *Herodias's* daughter) whatsoever it will, and it shall be done for it, even to the half of mens possessions. Whereas Charity with all her moving train, the poor, the orphans and the widows, Charity though covered with tears and full of intreaties, has no rhetorick, no force upon these men, cannot move a look, cannot extort a mite. But let the poor know to their comfort, and these *Libertines* to their terror, that there is a day, a day which opens into a dreadful eternity, when all these things shall be brought to a sad account: that there is a book, wherein all these expenses shall be punctually registred: and that there is an *Audit*, whereat these stewards, a character however now disbelieved and derided, shall give an account of their stewardships, and shall answer to all those dismal articles. Then they that have sowed plentifully in sin, must expect to reap as plentifully in punishment; and they *shall have judgment without mercy, who have here shewed no mercy.*

However, my beloved, let us always abound in this and like works of the Lord, unmoved by the patterns of extravagance, by the poms and prodigalities of a wicked and luxurious world. But let us learn thus much from them; that since in contributions of other kinds, such as for the setting up and support of theaters and theatrical entertainments, of what use to the government, or  
 advantage



advantage to religion, let others judge; since in such contributions many have been found cheerful and bountiful givers; let us shew an equal zeal at least in collections for these blessed nurseries, which professedly tend to the glory of God, and the visible good of our nation. These gifts, we are sure, will come up for a memorial before God, and not only lay up for us an everlasting reward, but bring down a present blessing on our selves, our children, and our land. This is a charity, that will *cover a multitude* of our national sins, as well as of our own; and will encline our Lord to be gracious to our prince and people: So that by these we shall prove our selves the best subjects as well as good christians. For it will cause the Lord to dwell among us, and to be our God. And then as the Psalmist closes his prayer, which he introduced with my text, *Happy are the people that are in such a case; yea blessed are the people who have the Lord for thier God.*

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