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JOHN W. PICKET, A. M.

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THE MORAL INFLUENCE OF REWARDS,
IN A SYSTEM OF EDUCATION, FOUNDED UPON THE
DOCTRINE OF THE WORD OF GOD.

BY REV. S. W. LYND.

That great and excellent man, whom all regard as "*the Father of his country*," in his farewell address, expresses his conviction that religion is essential to the support of national morality and prosperity. He says—"Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who would labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it be simply asked, where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in the courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure; reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."

I presume that this whole assembly is prepared to adopt most cordially the sentiments of this distinguished man. The religion of the Bible is the great safe-guard of our political institutions. Let the principles of the Bible influence the mass of the community, and we shall continue to be a free, prosperous, and happy nation.

The chief design of the Bible is to form moral character, and to subserve the best interests of men through their entire existence. Its principles should therefore be connected with every system of mental improvement. They should be introduced into every place of instruction on the earth. No person should be considered properly educated, whose moral faculties have not been trained by these principles. Every feature of public instruction which is not conformed to them, should be abandoned.

It is not my design, however, to speak of the importance of the Bible in our halls of instruction. That was ably exhibited on a former occasion. I have selected as the subject of this introductory lecture—*the moral influence of rewards in a system of education, founded upon the doctrine of the Word of God.*

I use the term *reward* here in the obvious, ordinary sense, i. e. a *recompense for something good performed*. Not every thing good which we receive, can be called a reward. Suppose two men are desirous of obtaining an office, for which one is much better qualified than the other; and the place is awarded to him who is best qualified. The one who is selected receives a *benefit*, not a *reward*. Rewards and punishments always pre-suppose something that is voluntarily done well or ill.

I take it for granted that a system of rewards and punishments is necessary to efficient government. The laws of our physical organization involve such a system. He who regards these laws is rewarded by a healthy, sound action of the body, while he who puts them at defiance, is punished with sickness, pain, and an enfeebled constitution. Rewards and punishments are among the essential elements of a peaceful and prosperous community. They occupy an important place in the moral government of God.

The Bible clearly teaches the doctrine of reward. Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He considered reproach for Christ's sake greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. The reason assigned is, that he had respect unto the recompense of *reward*. David declared, "Verily there is a *reward* for the righteous." Retribution was constantly held up by the prophets. "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured by the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Our Lord and his apostles constantly exhibited this principle in the divine government. Paul says, "He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a *rewarder* of all them that diligently seek him."

But upon what principle does reward proceed in the Bible? It is uniformly the reward of *moral character*. Every man is to be finally judged according to this character. The reward of the believer is proportioned to his *faithfulness*. God never confers his promised blessings upon any person, according to the *talents* which he possesses, but according to the *moral* improvement of his talents. He does not say to any of his followers, "Well done, good and *successful*," but "Well done, good and *faithful* servant." This position may be illustrated by two of the parables delivered by our Lord. In the one case, a rich man going into a distant country, committed to his servants different sums of money. To one, five talents; to another, two. When he returned and called them to an account, he found that they had made an *equal* improvement, each having doubled his deposit. The reward conferred on each was *equal*. His commendation of each was upon the principle of faithfulness. "Well done, good and *faithful* servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of

thy Lord." In the other case, a rich man departing for a distant land, committed an *equal* sum of money to each of ten servants, and commanded them to occupy till he returned. These servants made a *different improvement* of their capital. One gained ten pounds, and another five. They were therefore rewarded *differently*.— One received authority over ten cities, and the other over five cities; but both were rewarded upon the principle of *faithfulness*. This is particularly stated in relation to the one who had gained ten pounds. "Well, thou good servant, because thou hast been *faithful* in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities." We may therefore regard it as an established principle in the divine government, that he will reward every man, not so much according to the talents he possesses, as according to his fidelity in improving them.

The wisdom of this system must be apparent to every reflecting mind. If reward were placed upon the foundation of talent, or of superior attainments resulting from superior talent, the mind would be diverted from the essential constituents of *moral* character, and would regard adventitious circumstances as forming the basis of divine favor. This would naturally excite the envy of the human heart against those whose talents were of a higher order. But when reward is based upon *moral merit*, there is no room for envy. Great talents in this case only increase the responsibility of the person who possesses them. They neither form moral character, nor change it; and a person of small talents will not on that account be undervalued. All may reach a high moral character, and a felicitous destiny, who faithfully improve the trust committed to their charge. The influence of this system is encouraging and animating. It is decidedly good in relation to the forming of character.

Now if it be granted that every system of instruction should have regard to the training of the moral faculties, to the formation of moral character, and that the principles of the Bible are the great principles by which this character is to be moulded,—then the system of reward which the Bible furnishes, should constitute an important feature in the education of youth. The moral influence of reward, founded upon the Word of God, should be brought to bear upon all our institutions of learning. Let me repeat the principle that the Bible uniformly teaches, *the reward of moral merit*. This is a point to which all our youth may arrive by industry and correct behavior; but they cannot all possess the same grade of intellect, or be equally successful in the acquirement of knowledge, during the hurried term of collegiate instruction.

Here our plans of education are generally defective. They found the distinction of merit upon *talent* and *acquirement*, instead of moral character. Through the whole course of academic and college studies, our youth are carried onward by the im-

pulse of ambition. It is a fair race for the superiority of fame, from the starting point to the goal, and reminds us of the Olympic games, as described by the apostle Paul. "Know ye not, that they which run in a race, run *all*, but *one* receiveth the prize?" Happy would it be for society, if this principle of reward were confined to athletic exercises! The medal for superior attainment adorns the breast of *one*. The first honor of the college pertains to *one*, and he, perhaps, the least moral of all. Could you look into the heart of that *one*; could you see the motions of the spirit in those who failed to grasp this honor: could you know the feelings of parents and friends on both sides, you would probably see one of the grand causes that originate and perpetuate the disorders of society. I cannot but regard the distinction founded upon mental superiority as one of the most ruinous instrumentalities ever devised.

But as this is a subject of no ordinary importance, and worthy of a thorough discussion, it will be necessary to be more definite in pointing out its evil consequences.

1. It overlooks the arrangements of Divine Providence.

The mind of some youth are not as easily developed as others. One of the most celebrated physicians and surgeons of modern times, after having completed his medical course under the most favorable circumstances, was regarded by his instructors and particular friends, as a man of very ordinary mind and attainments. He fell, in their estimation, below mediocrity, and it was supposed that he never could rise to any eminence in the medical world. More than once, if I am rightly informed, he was refused a degree. But nothing daunted, he went to Europe, and continued his studies in the best schools. Returning to his native country, he rose to a character in the medical profession, which it is the felicity of but few to attain. But examples are unnecessary to an observant community. The facts are all around us, confirming the position, that some minds are not as early developed as others. To create a distinction, therefore, by any system of reward, which exalts the inferior over the superior intellect, because of the more rapid development of the former, is to overlook the arrangements of Divine Providence, and erect our tribunal in opposition to that of the infinite God.

Some youth excel in the power of memory, whose ability to originate trains of thought is exceedingly limited. By this faculty they acquire an apparent triumph, in the course of their education, above minds of far more vigorous mould. They receive the honor which properly belongs to others, even upon the principle of rewarding intellectual merit.

In addition to this, many young persons have, perhaps constitutionally, a want of confidence in themselves. But from whatever source it arises, their efforts to communicate thought become

paralyzed, and, in many instances, the entire equilibrium of the mind is gone in an instant. Under these circumstances, the highest intellect cannot arrive at the reward of merit for superior attainment. This want of confidence may be conquered in after life by habitual practice in one sphere of operation, and by mingling considerably in society. Some, on the contrary, have a confidence, frequently only another name for impudence, which enables them to appear to greater advantage than others who possess more substantial knowledge.— The reward which they receive is unjust, because it overlooks the arrangements of Divine Providence.

As far as my observation extends, the manner in which education is frequently conducted, has a tendency to perpetuate this error. All pupils are not equally quick in their perceptions; and this may arise not from a *want* of intellect, but from a wide and powerful range of mind which traverses connections and results, before it is prepared to grasp a given proposition. In the mean time, the student is hurried forward in his class. The teacher proceeds onward according to his own well trained and accumulated perceptions, taking it for granted, that all his pupils are prepared to follow him, when some of them are not yet perfectly settled upon the preparatory steps. I have heard lectures on Astronomy, Natural Philosophy, and other branches of science, delivered with great learning, which might as well have been uttered before a gallery of paintings as before a class of students, as to any permanent advantage which a class could derive from them. The number of honorable exceptions, however, is daily multiplying.

2. If this system of reward overlooks the arrangements of Divine Providence, it must have, to a considerable extent, a withering influence upon intellectual effort.

Let us suppose that the celebrated physician and surgeon to whose case I have referred, had suffered his mind to be influenced by his failure to obtain a degree at the time he expected it, what would have been its effect? In all probability, he never would have made another effort, and his invaluable services would have been lost to the world. Had he not been a man of uncommon firmness and perseverance, he would have yielded the point and sunk down under the conviction, that any further attempts would be useless. In nine cases out of ten, utter discouragement would have been the result. It is to be remembered, too, that the maturity of manhood was in his favor. Had he been a mere boy, it is probable, he never would have overcome the discouragement. But he labored with great perseverance, resolved to prostrate every interposing obstacle, and as he labored, a mighty intellect began to develop, and he became great in the midst of greatness. How many would have fallen where he rose.

Take a boy of his slow development of mind, and place before his ambition the reward of literary fame. Let him toil with ardor worthy of the highest honor, and fail in securing it, as the case supposes he will. Let the fact of his mental inferiority be made to stand out prominent in the distribution of commencement honors, so that he cannot possibly mistake the estimation in which his talents and proficiency are held by his instructors. Let this fact produce the impression upon his mind, that he is stupid, and it is not in human nature to resist discouragement. That bright gem which another system might have brought out, and polished, and which might have excited the admiration of a *world*, is destined to remain buried, till the unveiling of the mortal part displays its glory to the gaze of angels.

Take for another illustration a young man wanting in confidence. Through the whole course of his education, he labors under this difficulty. Every step of his progress upon the system of intellectual reward, has a tendency to convince him, that he can never attain to the elevation of others in the school or the college. What must be the effect upon his mind? What, but to increase his embarrassment, to paralyze his efforts, and to leave him, in conclusion, far in the rear of others. It is a fact not to be concealed, that a considerable number of college students make no effort to obtain the first honor. In schools, but few comparatively think of obtaining the medal. They perceive, at an early stage, that disappointment would be the result. It is certainly worthy of enquiry how far this may operate, in producing that indolence, and indifference to learning which characterize so many pupils.

In many instances the successful candidate himself will dwell with complacency upon his superiority of intellect, and, in future life, remit that industry and perseverance, without which the highest order of mind will ultimately become inefficient. What is the fact in a multitude of instances? Students have passed through their collegiate course with honor, and then have supposed that their education was finished. No one need be surprised at this, who considers the motive by which they were impelled to gain literary eminence. Inflated with pride and vanity, they have looked with contempt on those beneath them in attainment. Whereas, those who, during the same period, were not above mediocrity in their class, have, by diligence and perseverance, overtaken the former, passed far beyond them, and ultimately reached the highest point of human attainment. The reward of mental superiority is in the one case, *injurious*, and in the other, *unjust*.

Upon this system of reward, many young persons of fine mind have not a fair opportunity furnished them to gain the highest honors. The class is hurried forward before they are prepared in the understanding of first principles to accompany them with advantage. Now, some minds are so constituted, that, if they cannot

thoroughly comprehend every point as it is presented, they will not move onward at all. Their conviction is, that it is perfectly useless to make any effort in this rapid race for distinction. What must be the inevitable effect of this system upon their mental development and their moral character? It entirely perverts the great end of education, renders the place of instruction a hated place, and induces that indolence which attaches to so many pupils. I believe that in many instances, instead of punishing the *pupil* for idleness, want of perception, and dislike to the school, the *instructor* should be punished.

View this system in any light whatever, and it will be seen to have, in a great number of cases, a withering influence upon intellectual effort. One of our most respected teachers in this city informed me, when I named to him the subject of this lecture, that on one occasion he promised a reward to the most successful candidate in a particular branch of study. A little girl, a competitor in this contest, exerted all her strength, striving by incessant diligence and perseverance to secure the reward. She failed to succeed. What was the consequence? For a considerable time after this failure, she was one of the most trifling pupils in the school.

3. This system has a tendency to develop some of the worst passions of human nature.

It will be granted by all, that the most important season in human existence, in which lasting impressions may be made upon the mind, is the season of youth. This is just as true in relation to moral principle, as it is in reference to intellectual improvement. This season once past, and the mind, pre-occupied by false principles, will resist any system of moral government that comes in conflict with its uncontrolled inclinations. Should a teacher by any action, by any plan of reward, excite the very passions which the pupil has been taught to discipline by theory, what influence would it have upon the mind of the pupil? What effect would the principle of fearing God, taught every day, have upon the mind of a youth whose parent should excite him to fight a duel, under the promise of a high reward, if he succeeded in killing his antagonist? What if all the Trustees and officers of all the schools and colleges in the land should pass him a vote of thanks for the honorable deed?

If I understand the morality of the Bible, its design is to elevate the affections, to fix them upon proper objects, to perpetuate in the heart the love of God and man, and to discountenance every exercise of them which degrades, or which alienates man from man, and from his Maker. Hence doctrine, precept, example and *reward*, are all adapted in the Bible to the accomplishment of these ends. But of what use will it be to introduce into our schools and colleges, the morality of the Bible, as long as the prac-

tice of rewarding intellectual attainment continues? This system fosters *vanity, pride, ambition, and envy.*

It excites *vanity*, or that self-complacency which we feel in the consciousness of being superior to others. Add to this, a contempt for those whom we consider our inferiors, and it becomes *pride*; and pride necessarily grows out of this system. It cherishes in the soul, *ambition*, the desire to obtain and increase this superiority. Ambition leads to discontent and envy, and connected with these, it is the most reckless, corrupt principle of the human heart. It is the prime mover of rebellion against the government of God, afflicts its possessor with an unsatisfied craving fatal to happiness and virtue, and originates the most tremendous evils in society. The history of ambition is the history of *cruelty, and blood, and lamentation, and crushing empires.* The progressive character of ambition is too well known to need illustration before this assembly. It is a raging flame that spreads with inconceivable rapidity, until it becomes extinguished for want of fuel. It is the breeze, rising into the storm, and in the devastations of the tornado, concluding its course of wrath.

Nor are we to be informed, that the *candidate for literary distinction* may exercise a spirit of ambition without danger to society. Who collected the materials and kindled the flame which burst in successive conflagrations upon the kingdom of France in her revolution? Men, who, by the pride of literary eminence, set themselves above the Bible; invented a system of immorality, which they falsely called philosophy; unhinged the faith of the nation in the principles of the christian religion; and threw off the restraints of conscience and of the law of God.

The heart of man is full of ambition. It needs a course of moral training which shall control it to proper ends. But what is the influence of proposing reward to youth for rising superior to others in literary distinction? Is it not secretly and effectually cherishing a wrong spirit, a spirit of vanity, and pride, and ambition? And can it be wise, or moral, or religious, to uphold such a system?

This principle of reward excites *envy* in the breast of the pupil, which often becomes an abiding passion, and leads him on to every means to accomplish the ruin of his rival. Anger and fury soon exhaust themselves, because they are too violent to be lasting; but a life-time is too short to expend the resources of envy. How frequently has the candidate for intellectual honor felt as though he could annihilate his rival? Or, to say the least, how often has he wished him dead, that there might be no obstacle between him and the object of his ambition? A young man at college is resolved to obtain the first honor. He studies incessantly night and day. He prostrates his health in the enterprize. But the decision of the Faculty announces his failure. The honor is

conferred on a more successful rival. What are his views of the result? He believes that he deserved the honor, that partiality has operated to his prejudice, and that he has been unjustly treated. What are his feelings towards the faculty, and the successful candidate? We cannot even approximate the fact. And what is the issue as to his moral character? It has developed the strength of unholy passions, which not even death itself may eradicate, and which, but for this system, might have been efficiently disciplined and subdued. It is training the spirit to vice.

This system is opposed to the design of God in revealing himself to men. One prominent part of duty, as exhibited in the Bible, is to love our fellow creatures as ourselves, and thus to form a peaceful and holy community on earth. But this system tends to alienate man from man, as far as its influence goes.

It is important to distinguish between the *reward of intellectual superiority*, and the *approbation of intellectual effort*. The latter is connected with a moral influence upon character, the former leaves character out of sight. I will endeavor to illustrate my meaning. When Mr. West, who became one of the most distinguished painters of his age, was a little boy, he showed his mother a drawing which he had made. As an expression of her pleasure, she gave him a *kiss*, which greatly delighted him, and increased his desire to proceed with his little pictures, because his mother was so much pleased with them. He frequently observed to his friends in subsequent life—"that this kiss made me a painter." That simple token of approbation kindled his desire to become a painter, while it tended to cherish a feeling of filial duty. But let us suppose that there had been a brother who made a similar effort, spent as long a time at the work, took equal pains, in short, *did the best he could*, and yet produced a very inferior drawing to that of his brother, and the mother had distinguished one by giving him a *kiss*, and the other by a cold indifferent look, what would have been the effect? Every one is prepared to say, that the mother would have adopted the best possible course to alienate the affections of her child from herself and from his brother. And can that which is wrong in parental government be right in the government of schools and colleges? Here is a case in which the inconsistency and error of intellectual reward, displays itself most glaringly and offensively.

The late Mr. Fuller remarks—"It is a distinguishing property of the Bible, that all its precepts aim directly at the heart. It never goes about to form the mere exterior of man. To merely external duties it is a stranger. It forms the lives of men no otherwise than by forming their dispositions. It never addresses itself to their vanity, selfishness, or any other corrupt propensity." But here is a system of reward that appeals directly to the

selfishness and vanity of the human heart. It tends to increase the influence of self-love, already too predominant.

I lay it down as a principle in morals, not to be controverted, that no motive which appeals to the selfishness, vanity, or pride of the human heart, can be *morally virtuous*: for, if it be morally virtuous, then *selfishness, vanity and pride* are *moral virtues*. This principle is fully sustained by the Bible, as has been shown in the quotation from Mr. Fuller. If, then, I have succeeded in proving, or if it is conceded, as I am persuaded it will be upon mature reflection, that the system of rewarding mental superiority furnishes a motive which directly appeals to these immoral propensities, my argument is established. Will any man at the present day, understanding these terms, maintain the affirmative, that selfishness, vanity, and pride are moral virtues? Will any one undertake to show that the Bible does address itself to these propensities as a motive to moral action? And will any one say that this system of reward does not appeal to these propensities? To what then does it appeal? To *humility?* or *meekness?* or *benevolence?* or, in short, *to any thing that can be regarded as a moral virtue?* No; the system is wrong, decidedly wrong, and ought to be abandoned.

It will be perceived that I treat this subject on the ground of high and holy principles; and whatever objection may arise upon the details, it cannot, in the least measure, affect the force of these principles. Every motive to excellence in every department, must be morally virtuous or morally vicious. There can be no motives which possess not the one or the other of these characters. If we urge young men to make high attainments in knowledge, that they may faithfully consecrate all their powers to the glory of God, and the good of mankind, we make an appeal to their sense of duty, and their obligations to God as their final judge. He has committed to them a mind which in all its developments must have respect primarily to these obligations. The faithful improvement of talent upon this principle is morally virtuous. The reward lies with their Maker. As far as we reward pupils for attention, diligence, faithfulness, and correct deportment, we employ *motive that is morally virtuous*. All young persons have it in their power to receive the reward, and if they do not, it is entirely their own fault. It condemns them on the same principle that God condemns them, their own conscience being witness.

But if we urge young persons to make high attainments in knowledge, that they may be superior to others, that they may occupy a high and honorable station in society, and excite them to this result, by rewarding intellectual superiority, the motive is not morally virtuous. No good can ultimately result from it. It rewards for distinctions which are of no account in the sight of heaven. It exalts the most successful, and depresses the one who

fails, where the failure is not from any fault of his own; and his conscience testifies that he is punished upon a false and unjust principle.

Whatever reputation may be awarded to knowledge, we should never lose sight of the fact, that the *moral character* is the most important part of all that pertains to man. This is connected immediately with his eternal interests; and it is the duty of every one in society to promote the eternal interests of his fellow man, as well as his own. The formation of moral character depends, in a great measure, as far as instrumentality is concerned, on the moral training received in the season of youth. While it is a solemn obligation resting upon every parent to give this training to his children, teachers are not divested of responsibility. In order to accomplish this end, the principles and motives of the Bible must be instilled into the mind; and especially the fundamental truth connected with the salvation of the soul through a mediator. In addition to this, vicious propensities are to be eradicated. Pride, envy, malice, vanity and kindred vices must be subdued in their first motions, or they will acquire vigor by indulgence. Let it also be observed, that *example* must harmonize with *precept*. Every course of instruction adopted, must embrace it as a friend and fellow laborer. It is found by experience, that when precept and example are at variance, the pupil inclines to the *example*. The most thorough induction into moral precepts may be rendered useless by exciting or cherishing the vicious propensities of youth. In this view of the subject, it is worthy of a serious consideration how far the system of rewarding pupils in a race for intellectual superiority, may influence their moral training.

The impressions which are made upon the minds of young persons are generally of a durable character. Every argument, therefore, that may be employed to exhibit the advantages of exciting youth to make high attainments in knowledge, by holding out the reward of intellectual superiority, is an argument in favor of forming a *vicious habit*. The motive presented becomes a ruling instrumentality. It becomes the main spring of action in subsequent life. In vain will you urge the politician, the lawyer, the physician, to attain to eminence upon the ground of being useful, on the principle of glorifying God. This has been no part of his early training. The food of his intellectual strength was an appeal to his vanity, his selfishness, his pride, his ambition. His character was formed under this influence. It has incorporated itself with his intellectual existence. Solomon says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." But the reverse is equally true. Train up a child in the way *he should not go*, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

4. We are not to suppose, that the influence of this system is limited to a few college students. It is approved and extensively practised. It is carried into families, and into the community. The influence is accumulating. It perverts the judgment in relation to the forming of right distinctions upon the subject of true merit.

What is more natural than that the youth who has been taught to employ all his resources for the purpose of gaining *literary fame*, should esteem this the highest point of all true eminence? You may give him precept upon precept to convince him that the formation of moral character is the most important part of his education; but how is it possible for him to believe it, when the very highest reward is appropriated to successful rivalry in knowledge? He does not believe a word of it. If he believes the *testimony*, he must abandon the *practice*. If he believes the teaching of the *practice*, he must despise the *precepts* of his instructors. It is not the *power of moral character* which he is taught to appreciate by this course, but the *power of knowledge*. And has not this idea pervaded the community at large? Is not this system calculated to foster the pride of intellect, and to give a prominence to learning which does not justly belong to it? Is it not adapted to promote an almost universal impression that will ultimately be our ruin as a nation, if God prevent not? What is more common, and yet, what is more indefinite, than the prevailing motto, "*knowledge is power?*" The influence of language, and especially the language of unmodified, confirmed maxims, in controlling the judgments of men, and imposing upon successive generations, is but little understood, even by the intelligent of the community. The bearing of that single oft-repeated motto, upon the whole circle of intellectual and moral enterprise, we shall probably never be able to appreciate. It is not hazarding much to say, that it has been associated in the minds of many with the idea of virtuous moral action. Hence, we are so frequently reminded, that the principal reason why the Grecian republic did not stand, was, because the power which knowledge confers upon its possessor, was not equalized among the whole mass of the body politic: and we are warned that the glories which now blaze around our free institutions, will go out in everlasting darkness, unless the great mass of the people be enlightened. It is admitted, that a healthful moral sentiment is usually associated with this public enlightening; but who does not perceive that it is merely *subordinate*? The grand, the controlling idea is the *power of knowledge*. No one who has made accurate observations can fail to perceive, that *popular intelligence* has been cherished as the principal bulwark of our political existence.

Knowledge throughout the mass of the community has an important place in the preservation of our free institutions; but how-

ever widely diffused, however accumulated, it is not the *most* important. Here lies the error. The maxim that, *knowledge is power*, has operated imperceptibly upon the minds of men, and so has the system of intellectual reward, until *education* has become the idol at whose shrine they worship. It reminds us of the uproar at Ephesus, when for the space of two hours, the people cried out—"Great is Diana of the Ephesians." "*Knowledge is power,—knowledge is power,*"—has rolled over the earth as the voice of mighty thunderings. I grant that knowledge is power, but it may be power for *woe* as well as for *weal*. The greatest enemy to the happiness of the world is a being of *gigantic*, and *highly cultivated* intellect—a being of higher order than ourselves, but filled with almost infinite malevolence. What would be his terrific, destroying influence, were he *omniscient*?

We must change or modify our motto. We must abandon the system of reward for intellectual superiority. We must educate the noblest part of human nature, the *moral faculties*; educate them upon the principles of God's word, and abandon every system which infringes upon these principles, or tends to exalt the power of knowledge above that of moral character. Whenever the motives exhibited in the Bible become the main-springs of human action, then, and not till then, will society be purified, free institutions be rendered permanent, and knowledge contribute to the happiness of man. Let the controlling impression be formed in the mind, that *the Bible is power*, that *moral character is power*: let the principles of the Bible be laid at the foundation of the edifice of knowledge, and it will be an edifice which neither time nor revolution can undermine,—the glory of the nations, the joy of the whole earth.

THE EXPEDIENCY OF ADOPTING COMMON SCHOOL EDUCATION TO THE ENTIRE WANTS OF THE COMMUNITY.

BY SAMUEL LEWIS.

Fellow Laborers in the Cause of Education:—The constantly rolling wheel of Time has brought us together at another annual meeting, with another year's experience, and all the constantly increasing causes of encouragement to incite us to urge onward the great work that has caused our meeting.

But how changed is the prospect before us, and how much ground has been travelled over since we first met! Pardon me, if a moment is taken to contemplate it. You well know the doubts and fears that filled the minds and hearts of most of those who organized this institution;—how much there was to contend with; with what caution it was necessary to take every step;—how uncertain it was, whether public opinion would sustain the great cause of general education;—inasmuch, that some even prophesied that the public would oppose, rather than favor the great project. Yet Providence has so overruled every influence, that the questions which at first were doubtful, are now settled;—public opinion, so much feared, has vindicated itself, and proved that it was better than the fears of the timid supposed it to be. It does not now remain to be discussed, whether common schools shall be regulated by the same rules, and possess the same advantages as our best private schools;—whether moral instruction is to be made a part of the system of education;—whether public opinion is in favor of general education; etc. etc.; these and other matters, that, in reference to this institution, may be called elementary, are now settled, and to meet the expectation of the public, we are now called upon to discuss the expediency of adapting common school instruction to the entire wants of the community.

This address is designed to take the place of a report that I was requested to prepare, “on the expediency of making the course of instruction in common schools so ample and various as to meet the wants of all classes of citizens.” The subject is stated rather too indefinitely; and we take the liberty, therefore, of substituting public schools for common schools; and, without intending to limit the course practically, we shall consider the expediency of making the course of instruction in public schools sufficiently extensive to include all that is now taught in the best English schools; such as a thorough knowledge of the different branches of practi-