

PASTORAL LETTER

OF

His Grace the Archbishop of Toronto,

ON

MODERN INFIDELITY.

JOHN JOSEPH LYNCH, by the Grace of God and Authority of the Holy See, Archbishop of Toronto, Assistant at the Pontifical Throne, &c., &c.

To the Beloved Clergy, Religious Communities and Faithful of the Diocese, Grace and Blessing in our Lord.

Some time ago, we took occasion to warn our youth against a most pernicious sect of Atheists, or, as they are sometimes called, Free-thinkers. Their tenets aim at the destruction of the moral and social instincts of our noble nature, in setting aside the idea of God our Creator. There is little hope of the conversion of an Apostate Catholic who had the inestimable advantage of receiving the light of Faith and the most blessed Sacraments of Christ. The sin of denying the existence of God, and the Redemption of mankind by His Divine Son, is too enormous in one enlightened by the grace of the Holy Spirit. St. Paul says of them, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, have tasted also the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost; have moreover tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, and are fallen away, to be renewed again to penance, crucifying again to themselves the Son of God and making him a mockery." (Heb.

vi., 4, &c.) We may say also with Christ our Lord that "the last state of that man is worse than the first." (Matt. xii., 45.) Human pride in this case, like the sin of the angels who rebelled against God in Paradise, is enormous, and the unfortunate apostates, imitating those demons, are too proud to repent or to ask pardon of God. Hence their conversion is so difficult, nay almost impossible.

WE WRITE NOT FOR THEM

but to warn others against the dangers of reading infidel books, or attending lectures, or keeping the company of apostates and infidels. We say with St. John, "Whosoever revolteth, and continueth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God. He that continueth in the doctrine, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any man come to you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into the house, nor say to him God speed you." (ii. John, i., 9, 10.) Modern infidelity is worse than the old paganism, and requires a greater amount of hellish pride since it has the audacity to raise itself up against an infinitely good God, whom the very barbarians acknowledge and reverence in some way. No young Christian ever came to that state of mental turpitude of denying God without first having been corrupted by bad