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TO THE CLERGY AND FAITHFUL OF THE DIOCESE OF TUAM.

S. Jarlath's, Tuam,
Feast of S. Hilary, 1853.

Venerable and dearly-beloved Brethren—Scarcely have we celebrated the joyous Festival of the Nativity of Our Divine Lord, and of the manifestation of His glory to the Gentiles, when we are reminded of the near approach of the season of Penance. It is thus that consolations and affliction follows each other in succession; forming, to borrow the language of St. John Chrysostom, a varied tissue, with which the lives of the servants of God are, in a special manner, interwoven. Of this admirable diversity of joys and sorrows, the Birth and Infancy of Our Divine Redeemer afford, as the Saint remarks, a striking illustration. Scarce did His mysterious Birth gladden the souls of His Mother and St. Joseph, when they were terrified by the fury of the tyrant who sought His Death; and the light of the Star which brought the Wise Men to Bethlehem was soon again clouded by the fears which forced them to fly from the cruelty of Herod, and look for safety in the land of Egypt.

The week of the Epiphany, which has been just closed, has been to us, as to the entire Church, a week of joyful gratitude—reminding us of the vocation of our fathers to share in the blessings of redemption. "For (Titus 2, xi., 12) the Grace of God Our Saviour hath appeared to all men, instructing us that renouncing impiety and worldly desires, we should live soberly, and justly, and piously in this world." It is not enough, then, that we still profess the true Faith to which our fathers were called, and which has been transmitted to us as our most precious inheritance. No, but that Faith must also bear the precious fruit of good works, the Apostle telling us that Our Saviour Jesus Christ gave Himself for us, "that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people acceptable, pursuing good works." And St. Peter thus forcibly exhorts us (St. Peter, 2 Epis., i., 10), "Wherefore, brethren, labor the more that, by good works you make our vocation and election sure."

From these few passages we should learn the immense value of the true Faith, and to strive to exemplify it by good works. For, if it be true that (St. James ii., 20) "Faith is dead without good works," it is no less certain that good works, if not animated by Faith, are not meritorious of salvation. As well might you expect the earth to them with all the luxuriance and beauty of vegetation, when the heat and light of the sun are gone, as to expect the prolific vigor of good works among those in whose hearts the vital principle of Faith is extinguished. How great, then, must be the impiety of those false teachers who go forth, hired to delude and seduce the people, striving to plunge them into profligacy and corruption, should they succeed in destroying religion in their souls? That those emissaries of Satan have been active in their efforts to detach the poor people from the Faith in several places is a matter of sad notoriety. That those malignant efforts have not been successful is equally incontestable—a subject of gratitude to the Almighty for the graces with which He has strengthened our people, as it is a triumphant proof of their attachment to the treasure of the true Faith. Of the fidelity of our people, under severe privations—nay in several instances, under a system of merciless persecution, we have unimpeachable vouchers in the Clergy of those districts, who are witnessing the persecutions that are so severely inflicted, and the sufferings that are so patiently endured. We have from the Clergymen of Achill, recently published, the consoling assurance that the schools of the proselytisers to which hunger alone had attracted destitute children, were becoming deserted every day, while the schools of the Monks and other Catholic teachers were numerously frequented. And the Parish Priest of a district stretching along Outerard, the once redoubtable muster-post of religious impostors of every description, confidently announces that they have never succeeded in violating his borders. Nay, we have ourselves been witnesses during two visits to the remote parishes of Connemara since Easter last, how the enemies of the Faith were met and baffled by the zealous exertions of the Clergy and the religious devotedness of their flocks, notwithstanding the bad schools in which, on account of the bigotry of hostile proprietors, and their being excluded from the work-house, orphans, "thrown on the world by the famine, sometimes sought a temporary refuge to obtain a morsel of bread.

Is it meant then to relax now the exertions by which the wolves have been kept aloof from the fold in the great portion of the diocese, and by which in the few places where they were raging most, the little ones whom they sought to destroy have been rescued from danger through the vigilance of their pas-

tors? On the contrary, it is meant to extend and strengthen our defences, and if there be a spot more naked and exposed to aggression than another, there to concentrate and array those spiritual forces by which the utter discomfiture of the seducers of the people may be secured. It is meant to succor the clergy and people where they are laboring most, and to afford them more facilities of protecting, by a Catholic education, the children—that precious portion of the flock for which our Redeemer himself expressed such tender and affectionate solicitude. It is meant that "the little children be suffered to come to Him and not forbidden" (St. Mark, 10, 14) that their minds be formed to virtue and guarded from evil within the fences of Catholic schools. We hope, in short, to keep up the increased number of clergy whom we have established in remote and destitute districts, with such manifest advantage; nay, to increase them still more, to enlarge the number of the monasteries of the Order of St. Francis, as well as the schools of the Christian Brothers, and to extend to other parishes the benefits of those missions one of which the pious Redemptorists are about to open in Clifden on next Sunday, and on which we invoke the blessing of the Almighty through the prayers of the faithful of the diocese. How beautifully are the strength and unity of the Catholic Church displayed in the seasonable aid of those religious missionaries that are at her disposal, as their services may be required. Such are now in Ireland—the Redemptorists as well as the disciples of St. Vincent of Paul and St. Ignatius—some preaching, others occupied in the tribunal of penance, and others in fine, occasionally conducting the retreats of the clergy; "all performing the truth in clarity for the perfection of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, unto the edification of the body of Christ."—(Eph. 4, 12.)

It is an auspicious day that the mission opens—the Festival of the holy name of Jesus, reminding us of the wonders wrought in that saving name, since the palsied man at the gate of the temple, rose and walked by its virtues, at the command of St. Peter. The same sacred name is still "as oil poured forth" enlightening, as St. Bernard remarks, and cherishing and healing by its mysterious influence. The following Sunday, that of Septuagesima, will remind us of the near approach of Lent and its accompanying penitential rigors. Let us therefore look forward to this acceptable time in the hope of "bringing forth fruit worthy of penance" (St. Matthew, 3, 8.) It is only by virtue of the powers entrusted to them, as delegates of the Holy See, that Bishops can dispense in the laws of the fast of Lent. It would not, we fear, be seasonable to restore the general prevalence of total abstinence from flesh meat during the Lent, which prevailed all over this province, and indeed throughout a great portion of Ireland, not many years ago. When a dispensation is granted to any person from fasting or abstinence, it is a rule that other works of piety and charity are enjoined, nor is this rule relaxed, when by virtue of the powers delegated by the Apostolic See, we grant a dispensation in the abstinence of Lent. Except the four first days and the last week of Lent we grant, as usual, permission for flesh meat once only in the day, on Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays; and during the five privileged weeks, we except no day against the use of eggs, but Fridays. On the first day of Lent, as also on Wednesday and Friday in the last week, the customary prohibition from all white meats will be in force.

Let us recollect the words of St. Leo, that what is spared from sensuality must be given in charity.—If the corporal works of mercy are meritorious, much more so are the spiritual works of mercy; and among the latter, the instructing the ignorant and the reclaiming of sinners. About that very time when you will be called upon to supply what is wanting in abstinence by works of charity, and "to redeem your sins with alms and your iniquities with works of mercy to the poor" (Daniel, iv., 24), recollect the work of the Missions for the benefit of the poor, commenced in Connemara, and which, please God, will be continued occasionally, especially in towns, where, from the prevalence of vice and bad example, virtue may be exposed to danger. It is now their turn, it may be yours in a short time. "Give and it shall be given unto you" (Luke vi., 38). On the first Sunday of Lent there will be a general collection at the parish chapel of each parish, and let every person on that day, give a small portion of what, for the relaxation of the laws of abstinence, he is bound to give in alms, towards the support of Catholic schools and missions where most wanted, and let the amount of the collection, in each parish, be deposited in a neighboring bank, in the names of two persons; you will at once, and without burdening any, by extraordinary contributions, lay a foundation for a Diocesan Society for the preservation of the

Faith, and for the diffusion of Catholic education, as well as for creating a fund out of small and widespread offerings, by which those important objects may be secured. Aided by the grace of God, we are not wanting in sufficient resources. Nought is required but a more systematic organisation. But, should aid from other quarters be wanted, it will be best earned when there is evidence of such exertions at home. The generous, I will call it, the noble, munificence of the people, at Christmas, but just recovering from the exhaustion of a famine terrible in its length and intensity, proves by their solicitude for their clergy, their attachment to their faith; and surely we should not be wanting in opening a channel through which their little offerings may bring home to them and their children, such incalculable blessings. "For according to their power, (we) bear them witness, and beyond their power, they were willing."—(2 Corinth., viii. 3.) They are now full of alarm, lest the Almighty should in His anger continue those rains and tempests, that have been already so destructive. You will then anticipate that penitential season, when the Priests shall stand between the porch and the altar, imploring the Almighty to spare His people, and from next Sunday until Easter you will add to the collects of the Mass, the oration for fair weather, "*Ad te, nos, Domine, clamantes exaudi.*" that He who gives "seed to the sower" may bless the labor of his hands.

I remain, your faithful and affectionate servant in Christ,

† JOHN, Archbishop of Tuam.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

(From the Shepherd of the Valley.)

No parent who values the souls of his children, or his own soul, will send his children to the Common Schools whilst the means of Christian Instruction are offered to them. The Common Schools are the schools of Protestantism, and of Protestantism in its worst form. It would be even better to send children to Methodist or Presbyterian schools, if such were in existence, than to these educational institutions of the State. The reason is plain. At the one, your child will be taught that a false religion is true; at the other, that every religion is false. He is educated without religion, in most cases, by teachers who positively hate the Catholic Church; in every case, by means of text-books which misrepresent and slander her and her sacred teachings. Let not the parent hope to counteract the bad teachings and the bad example of a Godless school by occasional instruction at home and a lesson in the catechism on Sunday afternoon. You cannot teach your child, or cause him to be taught, a damnable indifference six days in the week, and hope, in reason, to unteach him on the seventh. You and your children, Christians, have nothing to do with these schools of the State. The State does not prepare them for you; she prepares and offers them to those who do not believe that God has founded a Church to whose care He committed His little ones and to whom He refers all mankind to learn their duties to Him and to their neighbors, and how these duties may best be fulfilled.

The State does the best she can. We do not blame her, except for taxing us to support these schools which are training up our enemies and furnishing them with weapons to use against ourselves. But education is not the work of the State. "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." Give to the State that affection, that support, that loyal service, that dutiful obedience which she claims, and justly claims, of you; but do not give her the souls of your children for which you must account, to which she has no right, to which she lays no claim, and with which she knows not what to do.

That your children may be fitted for their duties in the world in a Christian way, send them to a Christian school, or send them to no school at all.—They can afford to lose the undeniable temporal advantages which a little elementary instruction gives men here, and which, under the present system of things, it is difficult to get along without, but they cannot afford to gain these temporal advantages at the expense of true respectability here and of solid happiness here and hereafter.

Some of our readers may think our language stronger than the occasion warrants. A little reflection, we hope, will lead them to look upon the subject in another light. We do not say that every child sent to the Common Schools, abandons his religion; but we do most earnestly protest against the superstition that the children of Catholics, and especially of Irish Catholics, are necessarily secure from all danger of apostasy in virtue of their parentage; that the faith of the father must necessarily descend to his child, and that principles which are to the pa-

rents as a part of their existence, because they have grown with their growth and strengthened with their strength, are to take as firm a root and attain as healthy a development in their descendant when removed from the wholesome atmosphere of a Christian land to the pestilential atmosphere of a heretical country.

Were the traditions, feelings, prejudices, tastes, customs and literature of the United States, Catholic, the case would not be precisely what it is. The danger of committing the child to an unchristian instructor would be great, though not so great as now; but, in Heaven's name, what are you to expect when you turn the schooling of your child, that ought to be an antidote to the poison which he can hardly fail to draw in with every breath, into a means of administering that poison in a more systematic manner and more deadly form.

What do your children hear in the streets? Protestantism. What do they read in the newspapers? Protestantism. What do they find in the books with which they amuse their leisure moments? Protestantism again. If you send them to school to learn it by heart, in addition to all this,—what do you expect to come of it? Naturally, they will be more apt to learn this lesson than any other at which they are set, for, naturally, they are Protestants, and are Catholics only by overcoming nature and by the supernatural grace of God.

Leave them alone, and they will grow up Protestants. They were that when first they came into the world. They were made Catholics by Holy Baptism; and they must be taught your religion as they grow up. It does not come of itself, as the other system does.

Protestantism is not Methodism, for many Protestants are not Methodists; nor is it Episcopalianism, for the same reason, nor Unitarianism, for the same reason again. It is that in which all Protestant sects agree. And in what do all the Protestant sects agree? Only in one thing; in opposing the Catholic Church, and attempting to thwart her in the discharge of her sacred Mission. This is the essence of Protestantism. It is an old religion, almost the oldest; it is easily taught and readily learned. The seeds of it are implanted in your children; let them alone and they will develop in rank abundance without the need of any superintending care at all. It is your duty to root out the shoots as they appear, and to plant the new soil with a better seed; it is surely a supererogatory act of homage to Satan, to say the least, to commit your children to those who will sow a fresh crop of weeds and watch the complete development of the whole.

One other consideration may be urged, and if that have no effect it is useless to add another word.—Consider the morals of the Public Schools. What do you suppose is the moral condition of children herded together by hundred; deprived of the grace of the Sacraments. You know with what care Christian teachers watch those committed to their charge, and what gracious and efficient means the Divine Founder of the Church has provided; you know how the Church commands that the lambs of the flock shall frequent the Sacrament of Penance as soon as they are of an age to be deceived by Satan; you know that they receive advice there suited to each particular case,—advice which they can receive in no other way, advice and direction peculiarly demanded by the ignorance and inexperience of their age; and that, in spite of all this, Satan does gain victories, and sin does find its entrance even into the Christian school. What do you suppose it is when all these restraints are removed. When other temptations are added to the temptations of the world and the violence of youthful passions, where there are no continual instructions in morality, where it is no part of the system to accustom pupils to admire, love and practise virtue and to have a horror of vice? Happy is the man who knows only by conjecture what such schools may be. Miserable the folly of those who, with a hypocritical pretence of ignoring the melancholy facts of the universal corruption of our times, shut their eyes to the unspeakable evils to which we can only allude, and affect to hope that their children will pass unscathed through an ordeal from which nothing but a miracle of Divine Providence can hold one safe.

The education of her children is one of the most essential duties of the Church, and she has manifested in a thousand ways that, of all her holy and important duties, she considers none more holy, none more important, than this. Let not the poor think that their state of life exempts them from the duty of co-operating as far as possible with the Church in her holy work. Incalculable as is the value of a religious education to all men, to the poor it is of far greater value than to any. Will those who expect that the lives of their children must be spent in cheerless and ill-requited toil, deprive them of any